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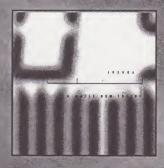
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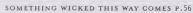
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the risks



bout five months ago, when I told people that we were running a cover story on the UN

sanctions that are massacring the Iraqi population, I was asked repeatedly, "Why are you doing that?" Or told "You're a music magazine—write about music." Or, my personal favorite, "Why put such a downer on the cover?"

Once the issue ran, however, people changed their opinion. All of a sudden, Punk Planet was inundated with calls, emails and letters asking us what we were going to write about the Kosovo Crisis. Initially, my response was "not a lot." When NATO first engaged Milosevic, everyone thought it was going to end in a matter of days. I didn't think there was anything we could do. Being a bi-monthly magazine makes it really hard to write about current events because usually the event has long since past by the time your next issue shows up.

Even as it became more apparent that the bombing was going to continue for a while (as we go to print, we are just approaching the two month mark), I still wasn't sure how we could cover the events unfolding halfway across the world. NATO bombs the Chinese Embassy; NATO bombs the very refugees they're supposed to be protecting; NATO takes out elecrticity, TV, and factories across Yugoslavia—they're all important stories to write about but by the time they saw the light of day in *Punk Planet*, they would be ancient history. I finally decided that we couldn't really do anything at all.

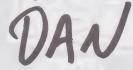
Of course that isn't the way the story ends. Right as I threw in the towel, I got an amazing e-mail forwarded to me. It was a transcription of an Internet chat with Boris, a kid in Belgrade, Yugoslavia. It was totally amazing to me. The chat had happened not I2 hours before I got it. The events being reported on the news that day were included in what this kid was talking about. He was witness to what was going on. As I read, I was near tears—the horror of living in a warzone was made all too real to me.

I followed up on that e-mail and learned that Boris and his friend Stasa (as well as their dog Sparky) were writing e-mails to their friends in America on an almost daily basis. I had the e-mails forwarded to me and I found them to be overwhelmingly moving. I began to rely on Boris & Stasa's e-mails for my news information instead of CNN—hearing the news coming from people my age who were actually living through it was so much more powerful.

It became apparent to me that this was the best possible way Punk Planet could cover the Kosovo Crisis. It enabled us to cover what was happening in a way that no one else was doing and in a way that wasn't as time-dependent as traditional news reporting. I asked for permission to reprint their letters in Punk Planet and got it.

What you hold in your hands is a unique look at NATO's brutal war in Yugoslavia. It gives you a glimpse of what it's like to have to live your life while bombs crash around you. It is a glimpse that is both harrowing and hopeful, touching and terrible. It connected me with the evils NATO is visiting on the innocent civilians of Yugoslavia in a way that no news report ever could. I hope it does the same for you.

Have a good summer,

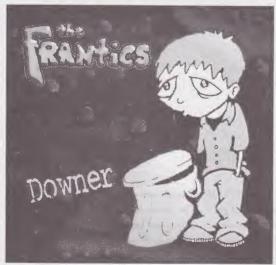




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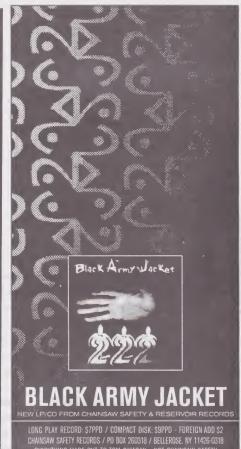
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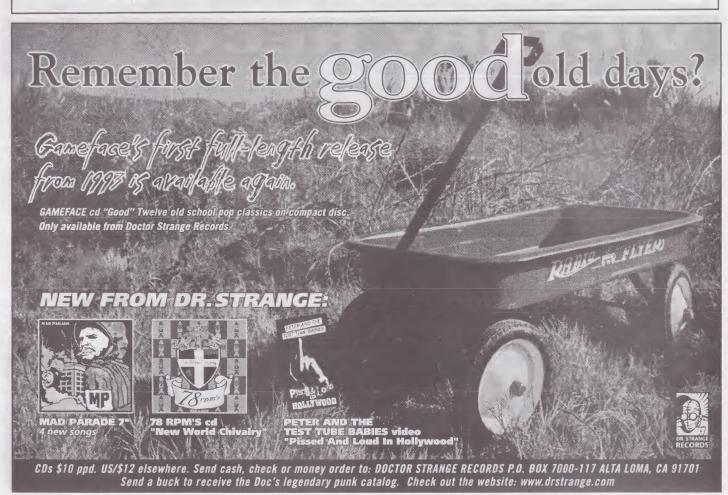
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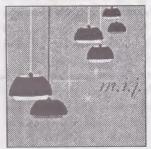


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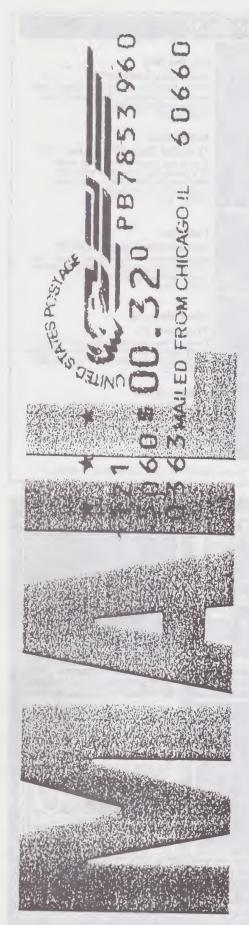


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Kids killing Kids—why?

Dear Kids,

Please don't shoot other kids, it's like totally bad karma.

No, seriously. What happened in Colorado has devastated me to no end—especially as it has hit so close to home for me, having spent my "High School Years"(tm) in Boulder, Colorado—I even knew kids who went to Columbine and on a couple of occasions did donuts in the parking lot with my friends.

There's a lot of confusion right now in the media and everyone is frantically searching for different scapegoats to wave their fingers at. One being the media itself, which I won't waste a comment on and another being the Internet. Anarchy is once again getting a bad rep; the media claims that the two kids learned how to make bombs from "Anarchist Websites"

So, it's time to be upfront and direct—I have never met a violent Anarchist and don't believe violence has a place in our revolution. My company, Unamerican Activities does not promote or condone violence as violence is oppression and we don't want none of that. Some people have recommended we remove our "Bomb The Mall" design, but we really would like to give the people who look at our site more credit than that. Of course we are not suggesting you literally destroy a mall in the same vein as when we say we want to "blow up the minds of today's youth" duh!—what do you think we mean?

When it comes right down to it, I imagine that a majority of the people who are reading this related more closely to the two kids who opened fire at Columbine then to the other people involved with this tragedy. Our hearts go out to all of the kids involved—any dead kid is wasted potential. Obviously, the kids who did this horrible act were intelligent in certain ways and I'm sure there is a lot more going on then we can ever know-cuz I know a lot of people (including to a certain extent, myself) who were picked on and harassed and embarrassed and felt like outcasts in high school. We grew up to give all those squares a big "FUCK YOU!" as we actually do something with our lives.

Absolutely nothing good came out of Eric and Dylan's actions. Killing yourself and others is the ultimate cop-out! Now misfits and outcasts are going to be looked down upon even more. Prying counselors will be much quicker to put misfits in "special classes"

and report your "odd behavior" to the authorities. Boards of education will start looking more seriously at making school uniforms mandatory as they supposedly "deter cliques". School campuses will be less open for coming and going by students (get your hall pass forgeries ready) and basically everyone is going to be a whole lot more suspicious. "Why does that kid dress like that—I wonder if he's planning on shooting his classmates?"

In times of general panic, it is much easier for the government to start removing civil liberties one by one as people feel more comfortable giving them up in the guise of "safety precautions" As terrible as this whole incident is, how many kids are really capable of these actions? Is it really enough that everyone else should have to give up our right to dress how we want, listen to whatever kind of music we want, be friends with who we want. Rather, kids should be given access to tools to express themselves creatively and it should be encouraged.

Will there be methods devised to censor the Internet? If you really want to learn how to make a bomb, you'll find the information—it's always been available if you know what you are looking for. Will this just be a convienent excuse. Will Unamerican have to do "age checks" because of our "potty mouths"

Everyone is looking for really quick and easy solutions to prevent a similar event from reoccuring. We are a society of violence and self-loathing. The President puts on his "sad face" and stands in front of the world saying that violence is not the way to handle your anger while on the other side of the world our military is systematically destroying a country with bombs much bigger than the little DIY pipe bombs the kids had at Columbine. The United States, like the two students who shot their peers, is killing people just like us. Violence is the way this country handles frustration, and this is what we are showing kids. We teach kids through our actions even more than our words.

I really want to hear from all of you what you think about the Columbine shooting and how we as human beings can prevent it from happening again, without relying on legislation. Also, I'm here in the office a lot of the time, if you don't have any friends and need to talk to someone, go ahead and give me a call. 415 282-1099.

James Squeaky http://www.unamerican.com PO Box 410663 San Francisco, CA 94141-0663

Iraq & Kosovo: the connection

Dear Punk Planet,

Thanks for covering the situation in Iraq [PP30]. It's important that this information gets out because so little is covered in the mainstream news. There's so much we don't find out. For example, I recently talked to someone who was in Iraq a couple of weeks ago and he said that one or two months ago there was an uprising in Basra and the government slaughtered 500 people in retaliation. Of course, the US did nothing—probably better than the "something" they would do, but it exposes their hypocrisy.

Also, not covered in the news, our ally Turkey—a major (the biggest?) importer of US weapons—has been carrying out raids in Northern Iraq against the Kurdish people for over a week. This is happening in the UN created "no fly zone" (which was supposedly set up to protect the Kurds) while the US looks the other way. And this is not a few cops looking for "terrorists," but jet fighters and everything.

Remember this hypocrisy when the US talks about how it cares about ethnic Albanians. They couldn't give a shit about ethnic Albanians. They liked the butcher Milsosevic just fine when he was keeping everyone in line. He was "a man we can do business with" according to Richard Holbrooke, a US diplomat. (It's the same thing they said about Suharto after he had killed a half-million Indonesians and 200,000 East Timorese-1/3 of the population—with US knowledge and weapons.) Last year, the KLA were "terrorists," they needed to be "taken down a notch or two" and "the cavalry is not coming." This was a green light to Milosevic to get rid of them. If he'd been able to do it quickly and quietly, the US would have been fine with it, but the ethnic Albanians fought back, Milosevic got out of control and now the US suddenly cares about ethnic Albanians.

The democracy movement in Serbia and the ethnic Albanians themselves have a better chance of ending this war. The democracy movement demonstrated for 100 days and almost overthrew Milosevic in 1996. Before the NATO bombs, the war was unpopular in Serbia—many people deserted and dodged the draft. But now a lot of people are pushed towards him because he's defending their country against NATO bombs. And he's taken the opportunity of the crisis to crack down on dissent. The most cynical aspect of

this is that the US knew (according to the Pentagon) that bombing would accelerate the ethnic cleansing, adding fuel to the fire and make Milosevic stronger. Like Saddam Hussein (and countless other dictators the US has supported), the US wants Milosevic strong, but subservient to US policy. The best thing we can do from here is get NATO out.

Michael McGregor 226 Jewett St. Providence, RI 02908

Self Defense: another idea

Punk Planet Readers,

Kudos to Punk Planet and Molly Brodak for the DIY self defense article [PP30]. Punk Planet continues to publish in important arenas other punk magazines seem to neglect.

I have a few concerns about the approach of self defense taken in this article, however. Self-defense or martial arts in particular seems to be marred in controversy about what's most effective, what approaches to take, and so forth. I guess I'll add to the fray not to belittle Brodak's effort but to share some more information that could prove important in a potentially dangerous situation.

Brodak's correct to say the best defense is simply not being there and using common sense. The reality is that most of us are forced to interact with the public and are therefore at risk of potential conflict, especially with the amount of volatile personalities out there today. Common sense and awareness are vital, but most of us are not constantly on guard. That doesn't mean each of us can't prepare ourselves to be more aware.

It's important to keep in mind that since life is not static, but a constant of often unpredictable events, no situation is ever going to duplicate itself. If a person has a gun, it may not be wise to do whatever that person wants. What they want may be your eventual death after this person has his or her way with you. Defending yourself against this situation, and possibly disarming this person may be wiser than merely succumbing to him/her from the get- go. Martial arts master Willem De Thours was in a convenience store when a thug came in and pulled a gun on the clerk. Before anyone knew it, De Thours disarmed the man, broke his arm and had him on the ground in agony. De Thours didn't realize what he had done until after the fact. More on this in a minute.

If the person has a knife, and is experienced with it, you most likely won't know it until after you have been slashed or stabbed. Inexperienced knife fighters will not know to keep the knives held discretely. In that case, don't walk away — RUN. And pray they can't run faster. If they can, are you really prepared to defend yourself?

Brodak recommends punching. What she doesn't mention is that most thugs on the street have probably been in many fights and/or can box. In fact, since boxing is a popular, national sport, recommending to an inexperienced 130 lb. person to go toe-to-toe and throw jabs at a 200 lb. crazed male is inane at best. Likewise, launching a front kick like the photos demonstrated is an invitation that a wrestler or grappler will be looking for. He'll be happy you tried to kick him in the nuts. Wrestling too is a popular sport, especially among date-raping jocks. Though Brodak recommends "taking someone down," are most of us prepared to do what's needed on the ground to someone who is trying overpower us with brute strength and aggression?

Chain-store-style Tae Kwon Do is also increasingly popular. People with this background will know how to avoid kicks— conversely, some may happily take a kick to the shin or knee, as they may be used to doing so—and will kick back. What then?

Similarly, any small person attempting a wrist lock, as Brodak's photos show, on a crazed, strong person, will realize how this is most often futile. What then?

Brodak's recommendations are good and appropriate but limited. In defensive situations, it's important to realize how the whole body is a potential weapon. Headbutts, slaps, heel-palm strikes, backhands, knees, elbows, finger jabs, chokes, bites, arm-bars, ankle-locks, leg locks and pressure point attacks are all potentially more helpful in defense than a jab or a front kick. In Painter Jitsu (a hybrid style, in which I am an assistant instructor, that combines boxing, Tai Boxing, prison fighting, jiu jitsu and so on) our motto is "bad intentions." This isn't just about being an asshole. It's about, in a self defense situation, hitting with bad intentions because your attacker inherently has them too. Brodak recommends to practice gently. Gentleness has its place, especially in practice, but it's also important to be able to hit with full power, and for that matter, to be able to access the inherent power each of us has, physically and energetically. If all you do

is practice gentle techniques, you may have to spend 20 years becoming a master of gentle martial arts and will THEN be able to defend yourself gracefully against attackers. Most of us don't have that time. From day one, our beginning students are taught how to hit hard, and that, for instance, if it's life or death, having a broken hand may be a worthy sacrifice if it means knocking out your opponent with a hook punch to the temple.

As with the whole body as a weapon, ordinary objects can be lethal or used defensively. A sharpened pencil jabbed into the carotid artery is deadly. A broken off car antenna can create distance between an opponent and yourself if slashed like a sword. Rocks are as old as time for bashing. Bottles, broken or otherwise, can make a mess. Trashcan lids can be used as a shield against strikes, knifes, batons, etc. Hairspray can be used a pepper spray substitute. Car keys can be poked into an attacker's eyes. You get the idea.

Being able to fight on the ground, especially if you are female, is also vital. For example: If a man is raping you in the missionary position, has his hands around your throat choking you, and you are unaware of how to use your arms, legs, back, and hips to break one or both of his arms from this position (called the guard in grappling), you are at a disadvantage if you only know how to do basic punches or kicks from a standing position. Even if you break someone's arm, and they are really crazed, they may still be aggressive. Do you possess the capability to them choke him into submission?

Consider the caliber of UFC (Ultimate Fighting Championship) fighters, then ask yourself if you are prepared to defend yourself against this kind of person. I guarantee this kind of fighting will become more en vogue, as opposed to strictly stand-up fighting (Tae Kwon Do, Karate, Aikido, Wing Chun, boxing and so forth), and more and more tough guys in the world will be aspiring to these ranks. Those you meet on the street will be of unpredictable level and state of mind. Never assume anything, except, perhaps, the worst. And be prepared for that as best as you can.

Though Brodak recommends using your head, I would argue that modern humans using their brains have only gotten us into more trouble. Part of a cultural problem we have is that our brains above all else command our destinies. Relaxing our bodies, getting our heads out of the action, and becoming more primitive and simple

could be feasibly more devastating in a lifethreatening situation. De Thours says his best martial arts teachers were black macaque monkeys of his native Indonesia. Primitive to the core, monkeys don't execute kicks and punches when fighting, and yet, according to De Thours, an 80 lb. monkey can effortlessly drop a 400 lb. deer. Likewise, the monkey can bite, pinch, punch and kick an "opponent," then scramble up a tree in split seconds. In De Thours' case, a monkey did this to him before he realized it. He found value in the monkey's lesson, and has applied primitive principals to be able to do what he did to the convenience store thug. In the two seminars of his I have attended he never told us how to make a fist, but rather stressed a different kind of awareness and keeping things simple. There were no techniques.

Finally, if all one has is techniques, they will often take a long time to become second nature. This being the case, find a martial art that emphasizes practical techniques. If you are spending \$100 a month learning how to do fancy kicks at a Tae Kwon Do school, and think that is self-defense, you are cheating yourself. One decent wrestler will prove you wrong. That's not to say a good kicker is at a disadvantage. Any experience is better than none at all. Rather, find a good jiu jitsu academy, especially Brazilian Jiu Jitsu (or Gracie Jiu Jitsu), or schools that emphasize streetstyle fighting and defense. If you are paying for self defense and do not spend any time learning to defend yourself on the ground. you are also being cheated. If you do train for self defense, regularly train as realistically as possible. Hit hard, kick hard, and be able to work and feel comfortable on the ground without worrying or thinking too much.

Sincerely,

Bob Conrad

Iraq: What you can do

Punk Planet,

The entire "Murder of Iraq" article in PP30 was an amazing eye-opener for me. I am 14 years old. My father has CNN perpetually blaring from the TV, so it is hard for me to ignore all the reports of the US bombing Iraq. Although the news tells us when and where the bombings occur, I am well aware that the public is not told about the full effects these bombings have on Iraqi civil-

ians. But I didn't realize how much I didn't know until reading that article.

The interview not only opened my eyes to the senseless murder going on in Iraq, but also filled me with sadness and compassion for the Iraqi people. I have great respect for Voices in the Wilderness and the work they do. If there is anything (and I do mean ANYTHING) I can do to help them out, please just tell me and I will do whatever I possibly can.

And PLEASE do not disregard this e-mail based on my age. I believe that anyone who is willing to help the Iraqi people, regardless of age, should have the opportunity to do so.

Unity,

Laura

Laura (as well as the other people that have written in asking about helping VitW),

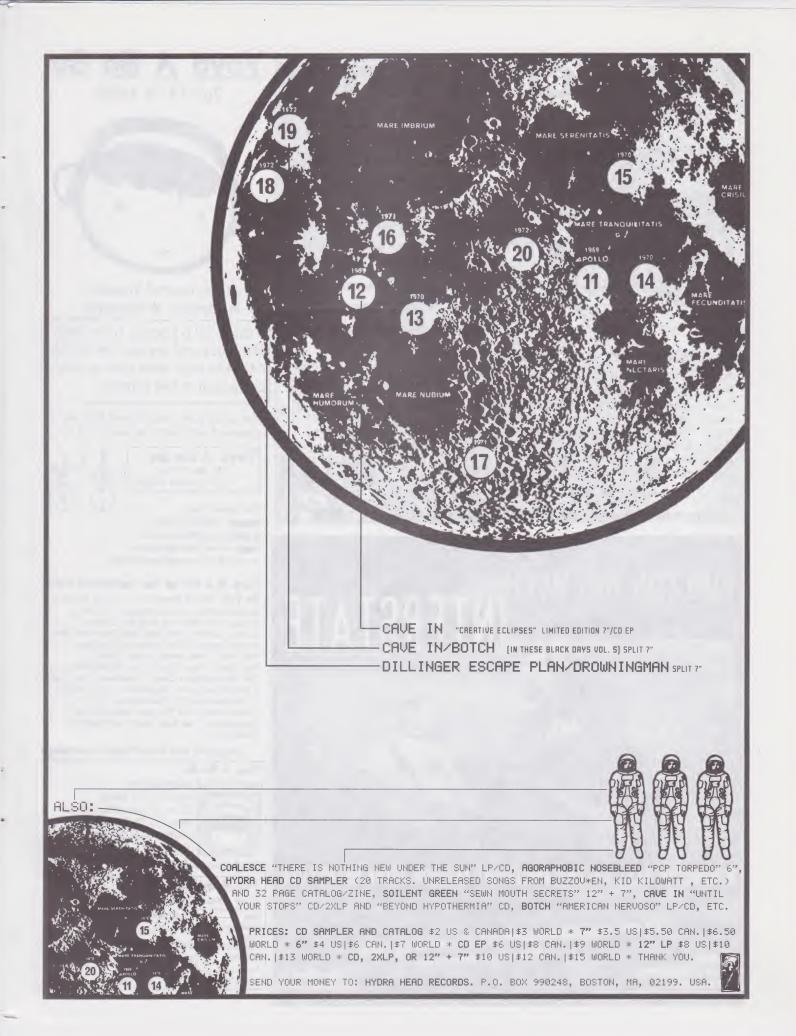
Thanks so much for getting in touch. There are many ways you can help end the sanctions against Iraq. I asked Soyun at Voices in the Wilderness what people can do to help out. Here are her suggestions:

- 1. Hold a mini teach-in by making copies of the PP article or by using copies of other articles (Voices can supply), by asking someone from Voices in the Wilderness to come and speak, by showing video tapes (which they are more than happy to provide with) regarding the issue.
- 2. Ask teachers to show the 60 Minutes segment on the sanctions or do any one of the above. Ask parents.
- 3. At such occasions, should they materialize, ask people to bring notebooks (NO AMERICAN SYMBOLS—like the Chicago Bulls mascot, etc.), bottles of vitamins, children's Tylenol, etc. and send it all to Voices in the Wilderness.
- 4. Write letters to Iraqi school children—knowing that they might not get an answer back. The main purpose would be to let the Iraqi kids know that unlike the government or the military industrial complex, we do not wish them dead.
- 5. If none of these suggestions appeal to you, feel free to contact Voices in the Wilderness. Their website is www.nonviolence.org/vtw. Their address is 1460 W. Carmen Ave. Chicago, IL 60640.

I hope those ideas help out. Do contact Voices, they are wonderful people that do amazing work.

Thanks so much,

Dan Sinker



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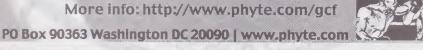
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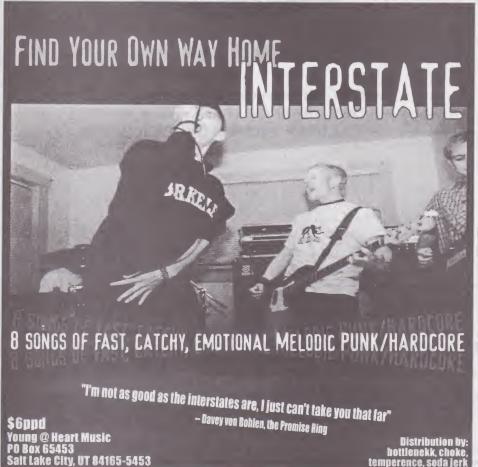
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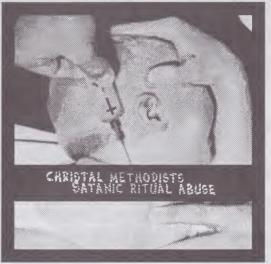
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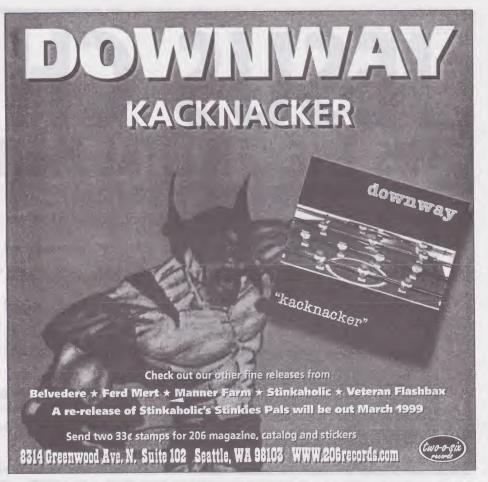
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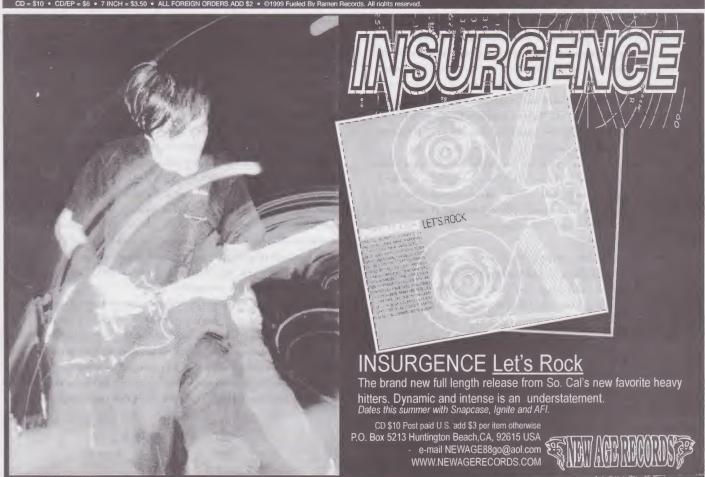
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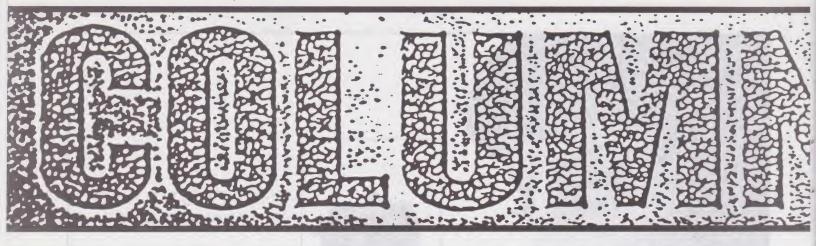


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danger wears a wig MIMI NGUYEN

Party Talk

Karina is cornered at the kitchen table, hemmed in by a crowd of fellow party-goers and birthday well-wishers. Salsa music and the low buzz of con-

versation wafts in from the other room. I'm absolutely terrible at social whatever, squatting with my back against the refrigerator and petting the dog, while Gelani, the birthday boy, makes a pot full of rice and stirs the soup.

Everyone wants to talk to Karina about Cuba, nothing new. I've been in plenty of parallel situations with her before, listening patiently while she reluctantly plays native informant for an audience eager for revolutionary authenticity. It seems Afro-Cuban music is all the rage, and everyone inquires after Castro's health, letting her know that they plan on visiting her native country soon. It's a romantic vision of socialist Cuba they want her to affirm. Because it's a party and Gelani's birthday, after all, Karina is polite, fielding their questions with a smile. She makes the occasional joke about government soap, but I don't know that anyone quite catches on.

As we leave, I tease Karina about her popularity, faking a pout and looping my arm through hers. "Viet Nam is a socialist country, too, you know. We defeated both French colonization and big bad U.S. imperialism. Doesn't that count for something? How come I don't see Ho Chi Minh's face on watches and t-shirts? Why do you get all the attention at parties?"

She answers, of course, in the spirit of solidarity. "Girl, you're right, it's not fair. Okay, next time someone wants to talk to me about Cuba, I'll say, 'Don't you want to talk to Mimi, too? She's from Viet Nam!'"

We laugh, imagining the stumbling responses and stuttering blank looks.

Post-revolutionary Realities

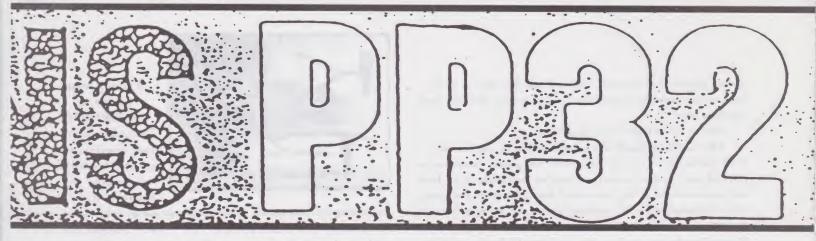
Karina and I have racked up a series of similar anecdotes, respectively noting the ways in which people approach "our" revolutions (we do get possessive sometimes) with the romanticized vocabulary of Third World insurrection. (We poke, uh, gentle fun at things like "solidarity"

tours in which First World leftist tourists get to work on a Cuban sugar plantation—one set up specifically for such tourists and only for a day.) Both of us born in our respective socialist countries, we were counted as "political refugees" by the U.S. government when our parents chose to leave. We're left-leaning but critical of leftist or progressive orthodoxies for a variety of trespasses. Besides the usual (bad gender analysis, rampant heterosexism, et cetera), we're none too fond of the two-dimensionality Viet Nam and Cuba are afforded in the U.S. leftist imaginary. No one seems much interested—at parties at least—about the difficult realities of running post-revolutionary societies.

(The government soap is a sign of the difficulties of running a national economy under all kinds of pressures, including U.S. embargoes, meaning that the black market makes a killing on bars of Dove, while the cheap government soap feels more like a kitchen scrub. I remember the care packages my mom would make for her brother—before we were able to sponsor his family to immigrate to the U.S.—full of Hershey bars, Levi's, and boxes of Marlboro cigarettes to sell on the streets of Ho Chi Minh City. Karina tells me stories about women smuggling anything from toilet paper to medicines in their clothes, their purses, bringing these and other contraband items to relatives on the island.)

Viet Nam, but Cuba as well, if not more so (seeing how much popular Karina is than me at parties), too often exist within the orthodox Left imaginary as mere names or, as Vietnamese feminist filmmaker and theorist Trinh Minh-ha writes, as "exemplary models of revolution, nostalgic cult objects." There's no room for complexity there, for examining local patriarchal formations (as if the proletariat wasn't also sometimes the patriarch?) or even socialist ones (the proletariat specifically defined as a masculine model is surprising?). No room for exploring lingering ethnic and racial tensions, which, surprise, still exist "even" within socialist nations. (What's happening in Yugoslavia is a fine, fine example.)

And there's something decidedly unromantic about the bureaucratic details of post-revolutionary governments, and I wonder sometimes if Viet Nam's been abandoned by the U.S. leftist orthodoxy because its economic impoverishment has required, by necessity, concessions to capitalist development by transnationals and foreign investors. (Yes, I am resentful.) That, or such conditions are ignored, so when a First World leftist academic notes that the Cuban national



ballet company performs so beautifully—Swan Lake on his last trip there—Karina answers with a straight face, "Oh really? I've never gone; only tourists are really allowed in that area of Havana."

And so the realities of revolution, how to radically reorder the economy, the administrative and judicial structures in a post-revolutionary society—?

No one's asking.

An Introduction, of Sorts

I'm a cynic. Once upon a time I got into punk rock for the politics. Ha. (I'm not bitter.) I've shed one version of angry grrrl (loud, obvious) I used to play for another (stealth mode-style, wig in place), I leave one foot planted in punk but my head is turned in other directions. I'm the refugee girl making good, in graduate school and churning out chapters of my dissertation, something about critical queer theory and feminist cultural studies in a shrinking ethnic studies department. I'm the p-rock girl who surrounds herself with other expatriates from the punk rock nation, nurturing ambivalent to hostile relationships to our former love-object.

Eat it up.

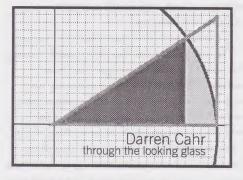
Shameless Plugs

I did a compilation zine called *evolution of a race riot*. In short, it's a collection of writing by people of color about race, "identity," and power, in and out of punk rock. It's available from Pander (PO Box 582142, Minneapolis, MN 55458-2142), the most fabulous zine distro for intelligent, moving, and yes, funny zines at the juncture of the political and personal. On a *race riot* note, Ericka also carries more zines by girls of color than any other. The on-line URL is http://www.geocities.com/wellesley/8686.

Helen Luu wants you to know she's putting together a zine by and about people of colour within subculture. "This is by, for, and about people of colour because we exist, because we refuse to be silenced, because we believe in empowering ourselves. I'm looking for any kind of submissions: art, essays, poetry, photography, comics, stories. Please get in touch. This is not limited to just punk. Spread the word! This is about us." Helen, 22 Bridgeport Gres., Scarborough, Ontario, MIV 4N8, Canada. Her e-mail is re_volt@yahoo.com.

I taught myself HTML code and threw together a web site of South Asian and Asian Pacific American feminist resources (both on and off-line). Check it out at: http://members.aol.com/Critchicks.

E-mail me, if you like, at slantgirl@aol.com, or write to me at PO Box 11906, Berkeley, CA 94712.



The moment I heard the news about the random murder of students in a Colorado high school, I knew that music would be blamed. Culture

would be blamed. Movies and video games would be blamed. And when it happened, within hours of the slayings, I sagely nodded my head and went about my day.

Apparently (or so the story goes at this early stage) KMFDM and Marilyn Manson are responsible for two kids killing a dozen of their classmates. Some people, I guess, can't tell the symptom from the disease.

When I was a teenager, I had powerful urges. Every kid who's a misfit, an outcast or a loser has powerful urges. Our urge is to MAKE SOMEONE PAY. Since time immemorial, that's been the urge. We blame our tormentors (who laugh at our clothes, our hair, our shoes, whatever) and see them as the evil inquisitor incarnate. They are our oppressors. We must knock them down. We dream of taking our revenge.

We listen to music that valorizes those urges. My e-mail address is taken from a Big Black song that describes a bored teenager setting himself on fire. We talk about anarchy, about killing our pain.

And you know what?

The people who make that music are, generally, normal people. They're pissed, and the music describes their urges to destroy, but they don't do it. The people who listen to the music are, generally,

normal people. They're pissed, and the music they listen to allows them to live vicariously through their violent revenge fantasies. And you know what?

Almost none of them ever kills anyone.

The number of people who actually kill people, even in this oddly violent society, is small. Very small. The people who pick up a gun and waste a dozen people in a school are sociopaths. There have been sociopaths for as long as recorded history has noted their existence. Caligula was a fairly unpleasant person, for example. Some of the folks described in the Bible were real charmers. Herodotus and Homer describe some real nut jobs, the kind of folks who would eat your leg before they killed you. There was that guy who stood on a tower at the University of Texas and shot people back in the early '60s.

And none of them, to my knowledge, ever listened to KMFDM.

The music is a red herring used by people, who lack introspection, to turn the spotlight away from the real cause of the problem. There are sick people, and there have always been sick people. These days, sick people have more access to modern weaponry. They can access information about bomb building, and they can buy M-16s at local gun shows. And many of them have parents who could give a damn about them, and have not even tried to understand the insecurity, depression and loss they feel every day.

Parents forget, very quickly, what fresh hell it is to be a teenager. I don't know why. The teen journals of disaffected youth growing up in the '40s sound an awful lot like the ones you read today, minus some of the profanity. But they forget how miserable they were and view the things they don't understand as the cause of their children's misery. I wore all black at one point in my life. I had a shaved head. I listened to (and continue to listen to) violent music and watch violent movies and read violent books and think about what all of this violence means for our society. And I grew up to be a lawyer who writes for punk magazines and plays music in a band and paints abstract paintings and writes bad novels and plays with his dog and is married to a woman who used to have blue hair and now is pregnant with our child. And I know so many people like that, people who are still able to enjoy the aesthetic experience of violent art (which people have done for thousands of years-ever hear of the Illiad?) while remaining interesting and useful members of our society. The ironic thing about this is that Marilyn Manson and KMFDM are, on a certain level, pretty funny. Their violence is cartoon violence-not so far removed from Warner Bros. cartoons and the three stooges.

But of course, they're all responsible.

But who's really responsible? How about the assholes who did it. They're responsible. They picked up the guns and shot innocent people for no damn good reason. Isn't that a novel concept—blaming the perpetrator? I could get used to this idea. Maybe then, when we don't try to blame every Oprah-esqe cultural signifier for every act of terror in our nation, maybe then we'll finally be able to put these things into their proper perspective. Until then, I expect that N'Sync will be held responsible for the next tragedy.

Remember, you heard it here first.

e-mail: Kerosene@aol.com



I'm sexy Asian female no. 245398723465

I can't tell you how many times I've heard guys say, "I really like Asian women," or heard of men who

have a thing for Asian women. I've even had guys that are interested in me say that to my face as if it were some form of flattery. Anybody that has had to deal with this "you people all look the same to me" attitude or similar forms of stereotyping knows how shitty this makes you feel, how you feel stuffed into a box and slapped with a label that belittles you and boils you down to just one of many aspects of you as a human being.

It's pretty obvious that there isn't a huge Asian presence (or any non-white presence for that matter) in the U.S. punk scene but it kind of annoys me how often I'm confused with other East-Asian women in the scene. No one wants to come right out and say it (I can't tell you people apart) but it is definitely implied. A friend of mine named Linda is not even full-blooded Korean like me; she is half Caucasian and half Korean, but I've had people standing within 2 feet of me thinking I was her and calling me by her name, a handful actually insisting that I was her and that I was fucking around with them by saying I wasn't her. And, I do not look anything like Patti Kim; we write about completely different topics, have totally different writing styles—yet I'm constantly mistaken for her. "Well, there aren't many Korean females writing for fanzines," is the reasoning I always hear.

I suppose that is understandable and is fair enough. But in recent months, time after time I've encountered this attitude in other ways that have either made me cringe or outright offended me. A few months ago at work, a customer asked me if I was Chinese. I told him I was Korean. "Whatever." He shrugged and laughed. "It's all the same to me anyway." I was completely taken aback that someone would actually say that out loud and was burning with the desire to say something snappy. Unfortunately, since I was at work, all I could do was shoot him a look of death and ignore him for the rest of the evening.

Not too long afterward I met a random guy at a bar. He told me he really liked Asian women and all his ex-girlfriends were either Japanese or Korean. Suppressing the urge to roll my eyes I let him ramble on. Soon thereafter he started ranting and raving about all the Asians in the U.S. driving around in their BMW's and Mercedes sports coups while there are "AMERicans STRUGGling for JOBS!" Then he asked me out. First of all, I can't believe any Asian woman in her right mind would date this guy. Secondly, I can't believe he asked me out thinking it was even remotely possible that I'd say yes.

Just a few weeks ago, a friend of mine told me that someone I like and respect thought I was attractive. I felt flattered. That is, until he added, "He really likes Asian women, you know." For the first time in my life hearing that kind of comment really got under my skin. To be blunt, I felt disgusted. It made me start thinking about the whole white-male-Asian-fetish thing. Are these men attracted to every Asian woman they see? In addition, naive though it may be, I was disappointed that an intelligent punk guy would have an Asian "thing." After getting past my initial reactions and feelings on the subject I realized that making a

COLUMNS PP32

judgment about this guy would be unfair. My friend Dave was bombarded with jokes about having an Asian fetish when he was dating my sister. I don't know, dating 2 Asian women out of something like 50 doesn't exactly constitute an Asian fetish to me but some people don't/can't see beyond surface characteristics. We are all programmed to have certain reactions and to speak in taught phrases and neat little pre-determined mottoes so naturally any white guy with an Asian girl-friend is only dating her because he has an Asian fetish. This is just as stupid and petty as a guy being attracted to me because I'm fucking exotic-looking or some other bullshit.

On the other hand, I can't say it bothers me when I hear blacks say they are mostly attracted to other blacks, Asians to other Asians, Latinas to other Latinas, etc. Why? Isn't that hypocritical? It seems like most people tend to be attracted to other people that are similar to them. Maybe not personality-wise but in terms of similar outlooks, backgrounds, lifestyles, and experiences. Though I hate to put it this way, nobody can know what it feels like to be of a racial minority unless you are one. Certain life experiences are different for me than they are for someone who is white or black. I can definitely sympathize with wanting to "stick to your own kind," particularly if language is an issue. I am not advocating voluntary separation of the races or trying to spread an "anti-miscegenation" message though I fully expect it to sound that way, especially to those of you (mostly whites) desperate to tear down anything you view as PC or otherwise progressive. I am not saying that race or ethnicity are necessarily divisive characteristics but it is ridiculous to think that it has no bearing on our experiences or lives. How many white folks in the U.S. know what it feels like to hear that you can't meet your partner's parents because "when I left the house, my mom yelled after me that she didn't want me having any gook kids?"

A stereotype is a stereotype whether it's positive or negative. I do not feel flattered when somebody tells me that Asian women are really beautiful just as I'm sure blacks do not enjoy hearing about how they are such great athletes or singers. Since Asians are not nearly as repressed in the U.S. as African-Americans, even people in the PC camp aren't as well-trained, if you will, to step back and think that having an Asian fetish (which, to clarify once again, is different from being attracted to people that happen to be Asian) is kind of fucked up. It's not the burning issue of the day but I am personally sick of being told how exotic and sexy I am because I know that in reality I'm fucking ugly.

I Heart Barcelona

My friend Martin and I were planning on going to New York for spring break. A week before said break I still couldn't find a plane ticket for less than \$250-300 from Chicago. I told Martin that if we couldn't find anything cheaper, and right quick, I was just going to go to the airport and fly standby to Italy for probably a lower price. "Oh my god!" Excitement crept into his voice. "I would LOVE to go to Europe again!" Two days before spring break started we put a pair of cheap-ass tickets to Spain on his credit card. All of our friends and family were incredulous. "You're going WHERE?" Barcelona. "Tomorrow?!" Yes.

It was altogether a 24-hour journey via trains, planes, and cabs. We were tired and cranky when we met Ricky, our host, at the train station in the city center. But as soon as I stepped into the streets of

Barcelona, I felt like I was at home. Everything around me—the streets, the store fronts, the layout of the city, the feeling in the air—reminded me of Italy and living in Rome last summer. I remembered how in love I was with the city just aimlessly wandering around every day. I didn't hear a single word of English. No one was in a hurry, frantically pushing people out of their way to get to the store 20 seconds earlier. Everybody looked happy and beautiful. Everyone was late for everything. I never had any idea what time it was. I had found my paradise.

We spent the next five days running around the city, exploring everything and gaping like little kids, eating amazing food, buying lots of incredible records, and hanging out with some of the most awesome people in the world. During a span of five short days they seemed to become my best friends. At the train station on our last day, our friend Beni hung out with us until half an hour after he was supposed to have been at work. Our other friend Italiano actually got onto the train with us and stayed until literally one minute before it left. As we were pulling away, all I could think about was how my friend Micah was moving there and how badly I wanted to go with him. On the plane ride back to the U.S. I wrote a letter to my new friends, already missing them.

To all you crazy fuckers that showed us the time of our lives in Barcelona—thank you so much from my heart. Especially Ricky "Lloro" Maravilloso, Imma, Sisa, Roberto, and the E-150 sexy Badalona crew: Carlos, Italiano "Nueve Horas DomÌnguez, Beni "Cinco Minutos" C.M., Abraham, & Ellas "Super-Kitch"—you are the best!

Endnotes

- · I'm starting a book project that is going to be a Vegetarian's Guide to the U.S. Can anybody help? Please clue me in to vegetarian/vegan friendly restaurants in your area or that you know of otherwise. Send me as much of the following information that you can: I) name of business (duh), 2) full address, 3) phone number, 4) days/hours open, 5) whether a variety of vegan items are available, 6) directions from nearest highway or main street, and 7) any additional comments i.e. type of food, specialties, recommended items, price range, personal opinions, etc. Any contributors will receive discounted copies (sorry, can't afford to give everyone one free).
- This is going to sound paradoxical given the first half of my column (it's really not) but I highly recommend checking out Mykel Board's column in MRR #189. I didn't agree with everything in it but it was one of the most thought-provoking writings on language and race and sexuality I've read in a while.
- · I would normally not go anywhere near an Avail show these days but they are touring this summer with By All Means from Italy. Check them out.
- His Hero is Gone is doing the U.S. a favor by touring in August with E-150 from Barcelona. Don't miss the first DIY punk band from Spain to tour the U.S.!
- · MK Ultra is being forced to change their name due to a bunch of buttfucks from the West Coast with a lawyer in tow so keep a lookout for their new identity (they will be on tour in July).
- There is LOTS of shit going down in East Timor. Contact ETAN (East Timor Action Network) in the U.S. at PO Box 1182 White Plains, NY 10602 (914) 428-7299, etan-us@igc.apc.org for more info. Send

me either a stamp/IRC for a list of international, national, or local contacts or a buck (nice letter if you're from overseas) for a thick, detailed packet on the goings on there.

• Soundtrack to this column: E-150, MK Ultra, Eskorbuto, His Hero is Gone, RIP, Demon System 13, Rattus, Lärm, Deathreat...

Write me at: PO Box 2110 Champaign, IL 61825-2110 or (new email address again!) kimbae1@yahoo.com. I will be touring most of the summer so please be patient if you write.



I was struck with an overwhelming feeling of how utterly fucked up each person and situation portrayed in the film was. The dubious Kurt and Courtney documen-

tary, that is. This includes the British reporter who orchestrated the film. He portrays himself as a hapless victim just on a quest to find the honorable truth. In reality he is obnoxious, intrusive, and if he had come into my neighborhood waving his camera and microphone around with a naive attitude, I'd probably slam my door in his face too. A stunning duh to that one.

Coming from a journalism background myself, I was schooled in just how obtrusive reporters should be. And how utterly shallow. The term reporter implies a non-thinker and non-feeler, somebody who merely relays information about an incident. Journalism in practice ends up being a parade of reporters quoting witnesses and other reporters—media outfits often use their reporters as sources—in order to draw a black and white picture of whatever account is being reported.

As we know from living in, but rarely acknowledging the profundities of, an analog world, black and white are extremes. An immaterial world simply can't be put into a hole as media tend to do. It was never once acknowledged in my journalism school that to strive toward objectivity is symbolic of modern humans attempting to create and enforce rules about the enigma of life, while never quite reaching the unspoken utopian vision we're seeking. In other words, in trying to be objective, and being incapable of reaching this state, journalists are constantly attempting the impossible—and always failing. It's not in the journalist's agenda to acknowledge how differing versions of a story will have many verifiable sides (and those sides also having other sides and on and on down the endless line), some maybe even contradicting one another. Life is complex and beautiful that way. We find a mandated sense of comfort in denying how life can be unpredictable, flexible and a wide gamut of other traits the English language is incapable of describing.

If we can't define or delineate something, it may mean we may not know. Not knowing, in our eyes, defies the standards we were brought up with. To not know is to be weak or lost. For some, not knowing something means someone or something else, like a god,

does. Those people then spend life putting faith into this other enigma's knowing. "We don't know, but God does," this faith goes, and thus there is a supposed solace.

It isn't just journalists who behave as if they are lords of life's continua. We are all guilty of applying rigid definitions to what life offers. We live under a cultural system that has brought the biological world to its knees. In doing so, we inherently know how to live, and we inherently know how other things should live too. We follow a well-constructed social order (which hardly resembles order) because it is the right way in which we should be living. In the narrative video Primal Mind, the narrator, a Canadian Indian, speaks of how his upbringing as a non-English speaker didn't prepare him for what he saw as a backwards social order created and lived by white culture. He tells the story of not understanding the definition we gave to what we view as separate from us: nature. The narrator says our definition of the word wilderness didn't fit with what he knew of the outdoors. He says the only thing he saw appropriate for our definition of wilderness was going to and seeing New York City for the first time. Likewise, Oregon Governor John Kitzhaber was recently quoted as saying Mother Nature is "stubborn and uncooperative." These views reflect how our social system inherently favors our world view of how things ought to be.

We grapple constantly with this order to attempt to keep our senses. The Kurt and Courtney episode is a good example of such a conflict. The reporter is playing his part, the interviewees play theirs, Kurt and Courtney (and their minions) play theirs, and in the end we're left with a big fucking mess in which we find no more answers (we're always seeking answers, by the way) than we did when we started. We've witnessed a heap load of unhappy, confused and disturbed people tell their sorry tales. In this competition of egos, nobody wins in the end.

This example can be stretched to include how we compete with and control our environment. At our present rate of consumption and waste production, we'll have permanently depleted certain natural resources probably by the time everyone reading this is dead. As its already done, our consumption and waste production affects other life systems first—we are at the top of the ladder, after all—but, ultimately, our domination over biological systems will cause us to face even more severe consequences than we are now. The future holds much more than smog, congestion, polluted water and holes in the ozone layer. It is obvious the environment's condition isn't getting any better, nor will it, given our cultural beliefs and practices.

I'm not advocating jumping on an environmentalist's bandwagon. Nor am I saying that we need to ride bikes and never consume gasoline again, or that, because cattle grazing is destroying our environment, we should never eat meat for the rest of our lives. These are all solitary attempts at solving symptoms of a larger problem, which is, basically, the godly attitude we as a culture have towards each other and all other living things.

Despite this, it's probably not enough that each of us give up our perfectionist behavior. Relinquishing the notion that we have to have strive toward something better, under the precept of our competitive culture, would be nice. More importantly, though, it will be vital to realize that we need each other. Our hyper individualism is making us hyper miserable. I'd go so far to say that as an individualistic culture, there's a direct correlation between becoming individualistic and

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hierarchical and the onset of misery facing most of us. Its effects are certainly played out. Take a look at *Kurt and Courtney* to see what it means for each of us to be living life for ourselves. Kurt, on top of the world as a cultural icon, was a victim just as much as the other participants in this social drama: those who have nothing or little in terms of what our culture values, such as money and fame. Of course, the others attempt to put themselves at the forefront as well. Courtney's father writes books about how shitty Courtney is, because, really, it's his way to cash in. Just as her being who she is, is her way to cash in. We all play this competitive game to some degree, and each of us is a victim of this competition to some degree.

In the same way that we rely on the rest of the biological community for our survival, whether or not we acknowledge this as a real and vital fact of life, we also rely on one another for enrichment in terms of what it means to be human. Because we behave as if it's all about ME, ME, ME, we miss out on what we really can gain from one another.

I recently attended a gathering at Reno's Indian Colony where elders were teaching younger tribal members their native Paiute language. After the language lesson, kids came out and danced. I was awestruck at how rooted their dancing was not only in expression, but as the narrator in Primal Mind tells of Indian dancing, the dance is rooted to the earth that provides for our sustenance and well-being. (He contrasts this to modern ballet where dancers attempt to defy gravity, to assert themselves as above laws of nature. I'll interject that punk dancing is basically about beating up one another in chaos and confusion, symbolic of how one portion of our culture has, um, progressed.) When watching the kids, I got an immediate sense of connectedness. Individuality in their dance was undoubtedly expressed. Each dancer had his or her own outfit that seemed symbolic of where the dancer was in skill and maturity. As a whole, while dancing circles within a larger circle, the dancers generated a shared energy, one that honored each dancer not as being above any other, but as a group expressing a feeling and ritual. There was no hierarchy, and even though some dancers were young and inexperienced, no one commanded attention. It was a shared, participatory experience.

The sharing of food afterward was also rooted in native tradition. Elders and women went first, then the rest of us got a portion. Though it's been fashionably extracted from native culture by Euro-Americans, the idea of a potluck was originally about giving away as much surplus as possible. The more an individual gave away, the more he was honored. With this selfless act, and a lifestyle that reflected similar tribal exchanges, natives around the world depended on their tribe members and sustained themselves for millions of years.

On our culture's grand scale, how do we utilize our deep, native principles of reciprocity, which guided humans for these millennia, today? Biologist Colin Tudge has some ideas. He pointedly describes the consequence of our culture's lifestyle in *The Time Before History*. More importantly, he tells where we need to go if we want to be around for much longer. He says:

"[A]...prime desideratum, of course, must be to devise economies that are truly sustainable....More broadly, however, the notion of sustainability requires new kinds of economics: economics that can broadly be called `green.' There are university departments and institutes of green economies worldwide. Strength to their arms

and brains. We will know the world is making progress when a Nobel Prize in Economics is won by someone who can show convincingly how the world can live well, and can indulge its ambitions, without the constant goad of material growth....

In the end, then, we are obliged to admit ... that the present-day economies prevail precisely because they reflect the underlying attitude of a significant proportion of society. If we feel that the economy is unsuitable to present needs, or at least to long- term needs, then we have first to change the underlying attitude. Any attempt to alter the economy without changing its attitudinal underpinning can indeed be considered unrealistic. To change our underlying attitude it is first necessary to understand it....

We can begin by asserting, commonsensically, that all human beings have the capacity to behave conservatively and acceptingly, or to be primarily exploitative and experimental. The question then is, which circumstances most favor which approach? The broad general answer, it seems to me, is that hunters and gatherers really have to be conservative acceptors. This is true whatever their individual personality or mien may be; however fiercely they shake their spears. If they try too hard, if they invent ways of killing that are too efficient, then they simply wipe out their prey. In the end, so long as hunters remain hunters, natural selection will favor the lazy ones who tell stories and hunt the way their forefathers have always hunted.

But it is in the nature of farming to be exploitative and experimental. The whole point of farming is not to accept what nature has to provide. The whole aspiration is to manipulate other species and eventually to till the ground so that the environment provides more than it otherwise would.... Farming, in short, turns an unimprovable resource into one that in principle can be increased indefinitely just by stepping up effort. In addition, by increasing output, farming societies create the surplus food and hence the leeway that allows them to take even greater risks. So here we have...[a] positive feedback loop: experimentation favors farming that provides greater scope for experimentation.

Thus it is that over the past 30,000 years...natural selection has favored the exploitative-experimental approach...But the party really is over...The first full-time farmers of I0,000 years ago were perfectly capable of overfarming...but even so, they could effectively regard the world...as a limitless resource....

In short, the attitude that has been so appropriate this past IO,000 years, and has allowed the most exploitative-experimental people to rise inexorably if fitfully to the top, has simply ceased to be appropriate. Yet our economies are geared to the exploitative-experimental approach, and so are our political systems. So all of a sudden, or so it seems, our political and economic institutions and philosophies are out of synch with the biological and physical realities of the planet. It might be unrealistic to devise new systems that are radically different, with a radically different motivation; but if we do not do this, then we cannot seriously contemplate long-term survival."

I'll stretch a bit and offer that with what American natives have shown us, we may not have to devise new economies. We simply reconstruct those with us to include the old principles of reciprocity. We can do this, as Tudge says, by looking to the biological world we think we're so not-a-part-of as a model, because biological creatures are inherently part of a reciprocal process. Author Janine Benyus calls this process

we must follow biomimicry, where humans will have to base our survival on the process followed naturally by plants and animals. In other words, we will have to relearn what it means to be a biological species within (not above) the context of the rest of the biological world.

Another option is to continue as we have, which will leave us with, at best, the kind of conundrum the Kurt and Courtney drama offers. With this type of saga, the foci of energy keeps us occupied well beyond where we could be looking, and that is how we as humans want to leave our mark on this planet.

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How Much Do They Pay Ya For That?

For most of the '80s I didn't really have a TV. I owned one, but it wasn't plugged in. It was an old black and white.

Later on, I plugged it in, but I got something like one and a half stations. I didn't have cable.

Then there was Iowa. Desperate for stimulus outside my graduate program, I became addicted to the Simpsons and to New York City-based daytime talk shows. Somehow, I found drag queens from Brooklyn and strippers from Queens enormously comforting. Go figure. Then I came back to New York, and my Simpsons addiction dictated that I get cable in order to get decent reception. The result is what I've always feared. I have developed a sick fascination with bad television. The worse it is, the more I like it. Jerry Springer, Judge Judy, you name it. For a while, I was even on a Friends kick. Call it the curiosity that killed the....you know. For years, people would make references to that show and I had no clue what they were talking about. Now I know. It's like eating Ring Dings. I know it's bad. It makes me sick. I can't stop until it's too late and I'm cursing the moment I picked up the first one. It's one of many shows that are supposedly set in New York, but filmed in LA. It isn't just the stock footage and the cheesy sets that tip me off to the fact that Southern Californians are designing, directing and writing these shows. It's not even the palatial apartments people live in. It's the attitudes, the idioms, the body language, the clothes. And the fact that people don't seem to work very much, or to worry very much about money. When I see a character in an orange shirt hanging around doing nothing all the time and not really sweating the rent, New York is the last place I think of.

Yesterday I ran into an acquaintance on the subway, and actor I worked with about a year ago. We asked each other the standard questions...what are you up to, what are you doing for money, blah blah blah. I couldn't help cringing when it was my turn. I simply don't want to list all the things I'm attempting to do right now because when I lay it all out in front of me, it doesn't seem possible. How the fuck am I going to do it all? And then I have to explain my lack of a job. Numbers start to form in my head. They stack up on top of each other and I start

moving them around, adding and subtracting. I'm broke, I feel like telling this actor, so I do. I'm broke, I say.

Fuck, he says, me too. I just got a new waiting job, I hate it. He tells me the name of the restaurant. I've heard of it. It's notorious for it's 150 page manual, among other things. It's a horrible job, he says. But I was desperate.

I know what he means. I have two sort of quasi freelance part time jobs right now. Last week, I went to Chicago to work on and attend the opening of a play I co-wrote. It's a tax write off in the long run, an entry in the minus column this month. This week, all my quasi part time work seems to have disappeared. The usual bad planning has left me with nothing to fall back on financially. I have several deadlines floating over my head, and several plays to whip into shape. Most of it doesn't pay a dime.

Running into the actor on the train was relatively painless. Its worse when I run into someone who really doesn't understand. They ask me what I'm working on, I give them the run-down, and they ask, How Much Do They Pay Ya For That?

Usually, the easy answer is "nothing." In the rare case that I am being paid, the amount is generally more embarrassing than just saying "nothing." What's more embarrassing still is that I actually usually pay to do these projects. That's the part I hide from the average person. I charge airfare on my credit card, I buy props, I spend enormous amounts of money on copying. I usually don't think much about it. Unless somebody asks. In other words, depending on who I compare myself to, I'm doing alright. Or I'm a loser.

For months, nearly a year, I have wanted to jump start my zine, Violation Fez. Lack of time and lack of money have prevented me. As of this writing, it's at the printer. I called the guys that printed it for me last time (over a year ago) to get a price quote. They're a small printer; they've done my tiny Xeroxed run for cheap without batting an eye. No question they were losing money on it. So when I called them this time, I wasn't surprised when they told me that the were doing things differently now. I assumed that this meant I'd be getting soaked at a local alterna-xerox joint (I just can't do the Kinkos thing with the zine...it feels sacrilegious). To my surprise, my old printer made an exception for me, which I'm sure means they will lose money, again. Needless to say, this kind of business dealing warms my broke, harried heart.

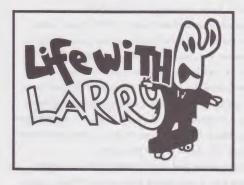
I was sorting through a pile of old zines today and I found one with a note in it that said, "Thanks for the order, Leah! You financed my Ramen supply for one more day."

I turned 35 this year. I can only hope that what goes around comes around. I don't go out to eat unless I can afford to leave a 20% tip. I don't know who these people are, these people on TV who never work, live in Manhattan, and go out to eat twice a day. I know they're not me. I spent a bunch of money on my zine, and I'll give half the issues away. I think my rent will get paid with a credit card check this month. I'm in debt up to my ears, and it's getting worse rather than better. I love what I do. It's just an unfortunate coincidence that the things I love are some of the least lucrative things in the world. What can I do about this? Nothing. People always have stories for me about people they know who make a lot of money doing something that's kind of like something I do, sort of. These things are always real helpful to hear. People suggest I write for television. There's all kinds of money in that. Sure. I can write dialogue for some chick in a yellow shirt who doesn't have a job. Nice

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work if you can get it.

Violation Fez #7, The School Issue, is now available. Send me a dollar, or your zine. c/o Leah Ryan, PO Box 2228, Times Square Station, New York, NY 10108. LEAHzz@aol.com. If you want to get your zine printed, check out Small Publishers Co-Op, 2579 Clematis Street, Sarasota, FL 34239, spcoop@flnet.com



I'm not angry
I'm not angry
anymore...

- Elvis Costello

I really enjoyed Elvis Costello's first couple records, but I wasn't a huge fan, and in recent

years he has come across more and more like a sad, middle-aged grump.

In 1978, though, I saw him put on one of the most amazing performances I've ever witnessed. The funny thing is that while the entire show was absolutely great, I can only remember one brief bit of it—a bit so powerful it obscured everything else.

It was during the song quoted above. He snarled, over and over, "I'm not angry," making it obvious that what he really meant was exactly the opposite. Each time he repeated "I'm not angry," the lights would change to some sickening shade of puce or chartreuse, throwing the twisted, contorted contours of his face into sharp relief as he spat out the words with ever greater venom.

I wouldn't have been surprised to see his head explode right there on stage, and yet at the end of the song he reverted to an almost meek and mild-mannered little man, mumbling "Thank you" to the audience and banging on in to the next number.

This being the late '70s, there was no shortage of punk bands screaming, screeching, hollering and shouting about how pissed off they were, yet most of them seemed almost cartoonish compared with Costello, who had little in common with the punks besides a spiky attitude and hairdo. For the most part, he looked like a skinny-tied new waver who played music that was fun to dance to but that no one took too seriously (think: "Turning Japanese" or "Video Killed The Radio Star," etc.).

But perhaps that's why it worked. You expected Johnny Rotten to spit and swear and do his best to annoy everyone, but this nice young man in a retro suitcoat? One minute he's pouring his heart out about some chick called "Allison" who's obviously dumped him in favor of a more muscular dude who doesn't wear geeky hornrimmed glasses, the next he's biting the heads off syllables as he tells you how radio is in the hands of such a lot of fools who try and anesthetize the way you feel, but oh, no, he's not angry about it, he's just going fucking insane.

At the time I was taking an acting class which contained a hefty dose of New Age psychodrama. The instructor would try to make us get in touch with our real emotions by having us repeat over and over, "I'm dissatisfied about..." or "I'm afraid of..." He would egg us on by saying, "I don't believe you," or, "I hear what you're saying, but I don't feel it."

People would break down into tears or screams; sometimes it

came dangerously close to physical violence. It could get terrifyingly intense, and outside of that class, the only time I ever saw anything like it was when I watched Elvis Costello sing about how angry he wasn't.

More than 20 years later I'm still bemused and bewildered by anger. It's not that I don't understand why anger exists—hell, you can't walk out your door, let alone turn on the TV or look at a newspaper without finding dozens of reasons to be infuriated. The question is: what do you do with it?

Suppose that for one day you could walk through life feeling free to say exactly what you wanted to every asshole who crossed your path. Of course in order to do that, you'd also have to suppose that no one was carrying a gun or a knife, that even if people were twice as big as you and had fists the size of your head, they wouldn't use them, that they were guaranteed not to strike back with anything more potent than words.

Even still, would you really want to tell everyone what jerks you think they are? If you're like me, you probably get mad when you see truly awful things like a mother abusing her kid, but you also get mad at dumb, relatively harmless things. Like in my case, it often bothers me when people sitting near me on the subway eat smelly food, or talk really loudly about stupid things.

Even if I were big, strong and mean enough to tell them to get their McDonald's ratburgers out of my face or to shut the fuck up, would I really want to? After all, it's just as likely that they find something about me offensive: my clothes, my hairstyle, or maybe they can just see it written all over my face that I think they're shit, which prompts them to think, "Who in the hell is this creep to look down his crooked, zit-ridden nose at me?"

You see what I'm getting at? In a perfect world, most of us would probably choose not to put up with most of us. Yeah, it's great to love your fellow man, but not necessarily at close quarters. In order to live in a crowded, complicated world, we agree, at least implicitly, to rein in many of our most primal impulses.

If you think about it, what's surprising is not that murder and rape and assault are so common, but that they're (relatively) rare. Many people, manage to go through their entire lives without ever being physically attacked, which, considering the way many people behave, is nothing short of astounding.

One of civilization's triumphs is that people can overcome their natural instincts enough to live in the close quarters of a crowded city. It also keeps a lot of shrinks, bartenders, drug dealers, cops, jailers and TV broadcasters in business.

In a famous little book called *Civilization and Its Discontents*, Sigmund Freud wrote about the price we pay for suppressing our true desires. Essentially, he argued, civilization is an unnatural state of being, which means that civilized people are halfway if not completely bonkers.

Like your typical genius, Freud only pointed out the problem and didn't bother to offer any practical solutions. Which is, of course, the same thing that I'm going to do, because I don't know the answer either. I know I personally carry around a lot of anger because every so often it slips out in the form of a cruel or sarcastic remark, or a totally over-the-top reaction to a missed train or an inconvenient red light.

Most of the time, though, I'll keep it deep inside, and suddenly find myself thinking that I'd like to smash somebody's face in just

because I don't like the way they look. I don't do it, of course, and not just because I'm skinny and cowardly; on the few occasions in my life when I actually did hurt someone physically, I didn't enjoy it all that much. In fact I found it kind of sickening.

That's not completely true. Once in a bar this guy was harassing me. I socked him and made his mouth bleed. The rest of the night my mood swung back and forth between disgust and exuberance—one minute I was ashamed, the next I felt like a natural born killer.

Based on that experience alone, I might be tempted to think that it's not all that bad an idea to go around socking people who get on your nerves. At least it might be better than keeping it all bottled up inside. But there's obviously a big flaw to that plan: at least half the people who get on my nerves are bigger and stronger than me.

I could take steroids, I suppose, and join a gym, and build myself up to Hulk Hogan proportions, but there are still always going to be people who are tougher or, especially in America, have guns. So maybe I should only take out my frustrations on people who are smaller and weaker than me? Well, there's my 86 year-old father, for example: he's a guy who can exasperate me like almost no one else on earth can, but I can't imagine getting much joy from knocking him out of his walker.

OK, that's an extreme example, but it makes the point: beating people up, even if you can get away with it, isn't always that great. So maybe you should just shout at them? Unfortunately, that often leads to someone getting beat up too, but even if things never get physical, words can hurt as bad as fists can, and not only the one who's on the receiving end.

One good way to express your anger is to join a punk band and shout about the government or the system. That way, you can scream bloody murder and nobody (unless maybe Bill Clinton overhears Chelsea listening to one of your records) is going to get his feelings hurt.

I tried that for a while in the '80s. Before the Lookouts learned how to play our instruments well enough to develop (or degenerate, depending how you look at it) into a prototypical pop punk band, our "art" consisted of me bellowing at the top of my lungs about Reagan or Nicaragua or greedy bastards raping the earth, you know, the usual...

As music went, it wasn't much, but it was good therapy. I've sometimes thought perhaps I should take it up again, but I couldn't sing most of the old songs without bursting out laughing. Back then I knew all the answers (hell, I even wrote for MRR), but now I'm more about questions. One of our classic "tunes" was called "Fuck Religion," and it was a pretty scathing indictment. Now I'd be more inclined to say something like, "It's true that religion has been responsible for a great deal of harm throughout human history, but it has exerted a positive influence as well so we need to look at both sides of the issue..."

Doesn't rhyme, and sure as hell wouldn't make much of a punk lyric, but it more closely reflects what I think. I've become so bloody reasonable, hell, I'm even getting pissed off about that! Yeah, that's it, I'll write a hardcore song against being reasonable... No, on the other hand, being reasonable is good—who wants to be Spike Anarkie or Felix von Havoc?

My friend Danny, who has a Ph.D. and should know, says "Too much thinking about things generally leads to unhappiness." Of course his job demands that he spend most of his time thinking, and he doesn't seem all that unhappy. Maybe it's because he unwinds by dancing all night in techno clubs, which, as you might suspect, doesn't require a great deal of thought. Maybe it's because he still has a pas-

sionate certainty about his particular cause, which is animal rights. Or maybe it's just because he's Irish, and Irish people are constitutionally required to be cheerful.

Seriously, I wonder if my newfound reasonableness is a sign of maturity, or just means I'm using my intellect to shield me from my feelings. There are so many things I should be angry about, everything from the government dropping bombs on people to high school kids with guns to people telling lies about me in the punk rock press to my boyfriend dumping me in favor of a dingbat trophy wife.

But all I do is grumble to myself and think, "Well, there's two sides to every story, I've got to put myself in the other person's shoes, I don't know all the answers, etc. etc..." Hardly the streetwalking cheetah with a head full of napalm that I once aspired to be.

Anyway, I may have found the answer. I was telling my problems to my friend Chantal, saying how I couldn't find anything in particular to get really impassioned about, and she said, "Oh, it's simple, you just have to start an emo band. Then you can moan all you want about nothing at all, and people will think you're wonderful."

Well, Chantal is a very clever girl, and I may follow her advice, even though for the most part I can't stand emo music. Which might actually work in my favor, I realize. I'd be able to sing songs about how much I hate this fucking song (and the music, and the audience, and their clothes, and their stupid boyfriends/girlfriends). I could be howling like a banshee, saying things like "This is so stupid, don't you see what absolute, contemptible, whiny, self-indulgent losers we all are?" and everyone would be writhing with sympathy and screwing up their faces into pained expressions of solidarity, and...

Yeah, it's already kind of been done, though, hasn't it? Anyway, I just heard some doofus American scientist on the radio claiming that writing is one of the most aggressive and violent things we can do. He was like, "Dude, it's so obvious, see, we write with the same hand that we use to hold our weapon." Well, I paraphrase slightly, but this guy was claiming that it's only since the development of mass literacy that the world has become such a violent place, and now that we are becoming "post-literate" (the trendy word for "illiterate'), world peace is surely on its way.

My reaction was twofold. On one hand, I wanted to strangle the fucking idiot and cram his stupid book down his throat (yes, he wrote a book to tell us writing is bad); at the same time, I thought maybe I've been a hostile motherfucker all along, tossing words like mortar bombs at an insensate public. Sheesh, I think I'd better go lie down and think about this.



FLASHBACK FROM PP29: The first time my old apartment got broken into was during my first year of college... always some boogernugget out there to throw fuck to

the wind... returned home to find our front door ajar... knew something was terribly wrong... like being forced to chew on anchovies...

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welcome home, sucker, you've just been robbed... I was undoubtedly the joke hit out of the whole burglary... they did take my "World Famous" knapsack to put everyone else's goods into... coming home and seeing your underwear drawer rifled through is just dirty... we had been violated... not the end of the world, it could be worse, oh yes...

PART TWO: THE CONFRONTATION

I awoke one ill-fated morning to an obnoxious pounding sound coming from the kitchen downstairs. Blinking awake in my cranky morning stupor, I thought to myself, "Why the hell is someone thawing out a chicken at this hour?!" Yes, that is the pseudo-coherent logic which graces my brain whence it is brought out of a peaceful slumber—that the process of thawing out a frozen bird calls for smacking it around relentlessly against hard objects. Right-o.

With thoughts of bird still on the brain, I decided to go down-stairs and give the unnamed roomie heck for making all the noise. Jammies-clad and with an unsuspecting frame of mind, I trucked on down the creaky staircase, swiveling at the foot of the stairs which put the kitchen at the end of the hallway in my line of view. An ominous feeling seeped into my body and any remaining thoughts of frozen chicken went flapping away into the land of dead bird.

With a few more baby steps toward the kitchen, it was clear to me that there were no roomies o' mine to be found hanging about. Just this DUDE. Some stranger decked out in nasty-ass cowboy chic leaning against the wall with this air of utter arrogance emanating from him. Like a Wednesday night line dancing reject from the local bar who had lost his way home. No wings for this winner, nuh-uh.

"Who the hell are you?"

"I'm a friend of Steve's. I'm supposed to meet him right now."

"Nobody by the name of Steve lives here. How did you get in our house?!"

"The front door was unlocked. It was wide open."

"That's bullshit! There's a deadbolt on that door. Now HOW did you get in here?!"

"The door was open, all right? Is Steve around?"

"BULLSHIT! That's bullshit and you know it y'stinkin' liar! YOU FUCKING ASSHOLE GODDAMN SONUVABITCH TRY-ING TO BREAK IN HERE FUCK YOU!!! Blah motherfucking blah blah blah..."

Can you believe this guy? Not only did he have the audacity to waltz right into our abode, but he proceeds to try and convince me that I was the one who had lost her marbles. Like, eat shit and die bastard! Ooh, I was livid all right. And after a five-minute yelling diatribe of every possible profanity my mind could conjure up, I have to admit that I was feeling pretty good and pumped. Hot damn, I should go verbally ballistic on people more often, woo! And although it may not seem like the sanest of responses, there is no denying the power of lungs. Sometimes you just gotta belt it baby.

Never mind the fact that the unfazed buddy was inching towards me during my operatic song to the foul-mouthed sirens. I should have been shitting my pants at this point, but instead I was just mildly peeing them. Somehow I sensed that this man was not going to try and hurt me. Dames like me knew the type. He was merely a two-bit hoodlum, out for a quick buck; a sucker trying to worm his way out of a botched job. Very botched, very bad. You almost had to feel for the guy. (Can you tell who has been reading lots of hardboiled fiction

lately? Gumshoe=good.)

It was at this juncture that I decided to make like a kangaroo up those stairs, into my bedroom, and call the police. So there I was, phone in hand at the top of the stairs, half talking to 911, half still yelling at our persistent pal. Seeing that phone in my hand certainly wiped that aloof smirk off his face as he fled our house through the broken back door in two seconds lickety split.

One of my roommates, Akeela, emerged from her bedroom, seemingly oblivious to my state of distress. Up until this point I thought there had been no else home.

"Akeela, there was a burglar in our house!"

"Um, can I just use the bathroom first?"

"No! Didn't you hear me screaming at the guy?"

"You know, Patti, in my country, if you act like that to a man, he will kill you."

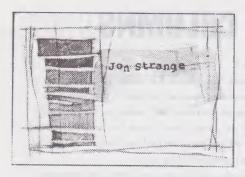
"What??"

The cops were now at the front door, ready to bust that thing down. It seemed as if they had made it to our house in exceptionally good time, considering I had only called them a few moments ago. What I couldn't have known at the time was that there were three house guests hiding out in Jocelyn's bedroom. The two girls had called the cops prior to my call, hence their swift arrival. And the third house-guest—a guy—slept right through the whole damn thing. So much for our knight in shining armor, huh? Let's face it ladies, a dick in the house will save you from NOTHING. Same goes for those pink Fox40 whistles. Yeah, like my feeble "tweet-tweet" is going to save me as my cranium is getting bludgeoned to death. At' best, you might be able to poke somebody's eye out with it if your aim is good. Er, could we all just take a moment to knock on some wood please? Thanks.

We went through all of the formalities with the cops again, except this time lucky moi got to go to the police station to try and identify the bozo. Nothing cool like a lineup or anything like that. Just an endless amount of scrolling through mugshot after mugshot on computer file. An experience I never want to endure again. Them boys were no pretty buncha daffodils, lemme tell ya. It all kind of made me sick to my stomach after a while. You can only point and click on so many shifty eyes and crooked noses before it gets to you. All of which was to no avail because it was like looking for a needle in a haystack. The dude was not to be found—never to be seen again. Save for in the faces of other cowboy dudes that looked similar to him, but were not him.

Even though having a stranger in your house is no laughing matter, I guess I can look back at this particular incident and chuckle at the irony of it all. Buddy breaks into house of five kids present: one indifferent, one in dreamland, two scared stiff, and one unleashing hellfury so venomous only Satan's mom would approve. Buddy gains nothing, the kids gain nothing, and the cops gain another undeserved box of tidbits. Fun stuff. Almost as fun as sporty Kool-Aid man, but no banana. So I leave you this time around with a Patti Springer (she is my fourth-removed Jewish-Korean cousin) moment: "Never trust the sounds of thawing chicken. Chances are, it ain't chicken."

Patti Kim, Box 68568, 360A Bloor St.W, Toronto ON, M5S IXI Canada or fhabzine@interlog.com.



Just Play!
Recently, I was at a benefit show for the organization that puts on Take Back
The Night at Ohio
State University.
Several bands from

out of town were playing, including one which, with the help of a booking agent, talked its way on to the lineup only a few weeks prior to the actual show date. Among the stipulations were that they be guaranteed payment of \$600 for playing the show. Presumably this fee would be split up between the band, their booking agent, and the band that was on tour with them. Keep in mind that this is a "punk" band we're talking about, demanding a guarantee from a DIY venue. After the booking agent was informed that \$600 was out of the question, they settled on a \$300 guarantee, and a contract was sent to the venue, along with a rider which included demands for beer, a box of herbal tea bags, a private dressing room, towels, and a tray of cheese sandwiches. I wish I was making this up.

In between songs during the band's set, I yelled out to their singer, asking him if any of what I had heard about guarantees, contracts, and riders was true. He told me repeatedly that it wasn't, which was a lie (as I later confirmed with the kids who set up the show). Before the conversation could continue, a cry rose up from the crowd: "Just play!" And so they did.

Now, what alarms me the most isn't that the band asked for all this money, or that they sent out an insulting list of demands along with their contract (which the venue ignored, for the most part), or that they lied about it onstage. What alarms me is that the crowd just didn't give a shit'. A group of people who regularly support several DIY venues in this town had such utter disregard for DIY politics that, in the face of this news about their cherished band, they could only say "Just play!?" I know I'm not the only one who cares about this, but did I ever feel lonely that night.

You see, it's a question of intent. If you believe, as increasing numbers of grumpy jaded old punks and spoiled suburban kids do, that punk isn't about politics, but about the music, then you probably also think that I should have shut my pie-hole that night and let the band rock out. But if you still think that punk is, and has always been, about content over style, about having something to say than simply a nice way of saying nothing, then you'd agree that the band in question had no business being on that stage, claiming to support our community when they really care about fame and money. It's the difference between the emo of "I was born to be a writer of words without voices" and the emo of "Do you think if we played CMJ this year we could make the cover of Magnet?" It's the difference between the punk rock of "I refuse to be a man" and the punk rock of "I use the word fag because it's punk to be offensive. Who are you, the PC Police?"

Ultimately, it comes down to deciding whether punk is simply a style of music, a subculture to sell records to, or a community of activists. When I said a few columns ago that it's time we up the ante

on what we expect from one another as fellow punks, I didn't mean exclusively that we focus on traditional political activism. It's just as important that we look at our own work within the punk scene as activism, specifically as media activism, and that we take seriously the political ramifications of being media activists. As media activists, we must consistently create and distribute media that is democratic and subversive—whether you play in a band, write for a zine, put on shows, sell records, make flyers, take photographs; or in any other way create or disseminate information and ideas to the punk world and beyond. By democratic, I mean media that respects each person's contributions, whether as artist or audience, equally and fairly. And by subversive, I mean that we seriously challenge and reconfigure accepted approaches to both the style and the content of our communication.

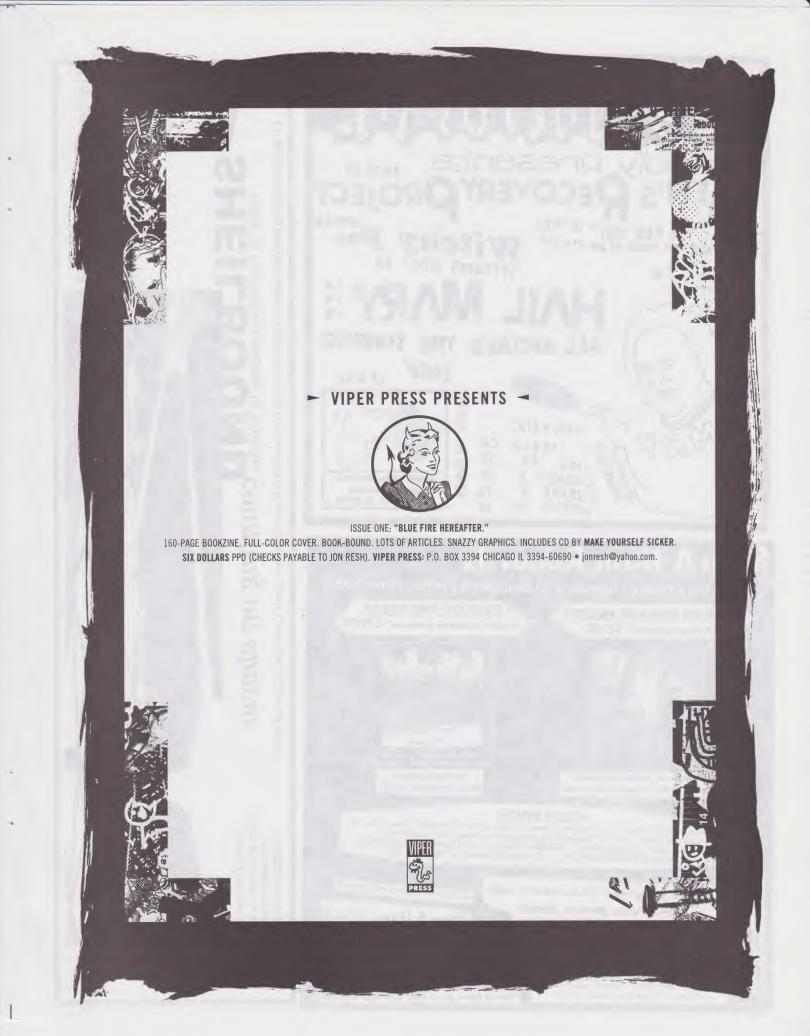
This set of criteria extends well beyond what we would normally call "political" media. It doesn't matter if you're singing love songs or outlining the pitfalls and inconsistencies of US foreign policyyour media can and should be democratic and subversive. Sing songs of democratic love, of subversive love. Show us examples of solutions to problems, rather than a recitation of mainstream political issues with a left twist. If it's music, art, writing, design, business-I don't care what—the punk rock media activist has a responsibility to present an artistic and stylistic agenda that is democratic and subversive. That sure as fuck doesn't include \$600 guarantees, contract riders, antipc hysteria, or churning out the same music that we're far too familiar with already. That responsibility does include making media which aims to improve communication by speaking tongues that aren't spoken elsewhere, by focusing on real people and their lives, and by including the audience and the artist as active participants. Media that is faithful to its community will find a community that is faithful to its media. Media that employs booking agents who don't understand anything about the DIY community and try to sucker us with big money guarantees will find, well, loudmouths like me heckling them at the show.

As a community with a heritage of vibrant, independent and active media, we have an obligation to become and remain media activists, to create and sustain democratic and subversive media in every way possible. We have no excuse not to—it is our greatest strength.

Recommended: Asian Dub Foundation Free Satpal Ram;
Petrograd split 12"; U. Utah Phillips I've Got To Know and The Past
Didn't Go Anywhere (with Ani Difranco); Red Monkey Make The
Moment; Chumbawamba Shhh; Rainer Maria Look Now Look
Again; Deathreat live; Elaine Brown A Taste Of Power; The Baffler
#11; Perverts At Home; Stacey Wakefield and Grrrt Not For Rent;
Institute for Public Accuracy (www.accuracy.org); Z Net
(www.znet.org).

Credit to C.A. Griffith and H.L.T. Quan of the Lizard's Mouth Media Collective for inspiration and ideas, which I have borrowed and appropriated liberally.

As always, please write. Jon Strange PO Box 10013 Columbus OH 43201 e-mail: jonstrange@hotmail.com







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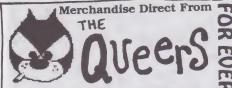
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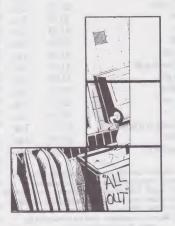
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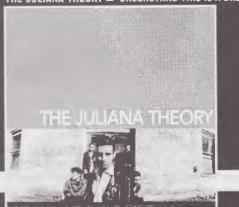


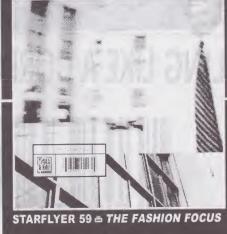
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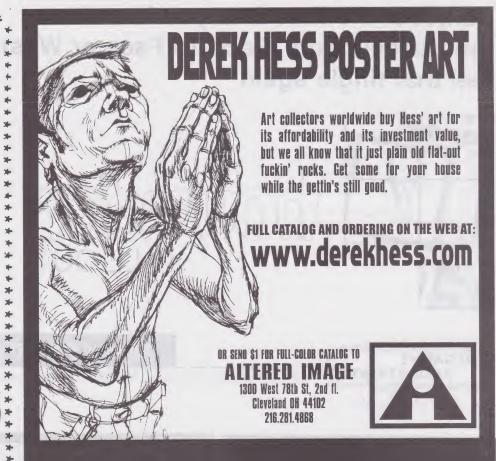
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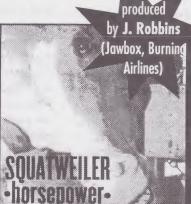


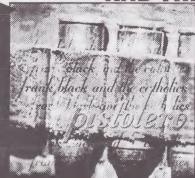
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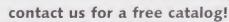
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You're originally from Olympia. Was your family connected to Evergreen College? How did you get involved in music?

Yeah, I pretty much grew up here, but my dad was restless—we moved away when I was a kid and then moved back when I was a teenager. I wasn't really connected to Evergreen, but there was a radio station there called KAOS. I started working at the station when I was fifteen. I played clarinet in the Junior High Band for a couple of years, but it wasn't really my thing.

What got you interested in rock?

Listening to AM radio. However, in fifth grade a friend turned me on to the Beatles. That was the first time I got excited about a band. We were only listening to pre-'67 stuff. I always loved the Beatles' first couple of albums. And the Rolling Stones 12 X 5....

Was the interest in older rock a reaction to the glam and prog rock that was going on at the time?

I wasn't really aware of what was going on at the time. When I got into junior high, I was introduced to Elton John, Steve Miller and those kind of bands—I was eleven or twelve. In the back of my mind, I had the idea that music should be like the early Beatles and Rolling Stones. I thought, "Why aren't people making records like this?" So from there I got into '60s stuff like Jan and Dean and The Byrds. That was the music that was most exciting to me.

You sound like you were an oddball kid.

I guess so. I was a little younger than most people who got excited by new wave and punk when it first happened. But I get the feeling that a lot of people had similar sentiments that real rock and roll was something that had died IO years earlier and that we needed to find something that sounded like that. Even though punk may not have sounded exactly like it, punk had

the same excitement, energy, feeling, simplicity and directness. When punk rock first happened, a lot of people compared Gene Vincent, Eddie Cochran or the Stones to what was going on. A lot of people who got into new wave and championed it were '60s revivalists like Bomp magazine. When the Sex Pistols covered Eddie Cochran songs, and Patti Smith covered "Land of a Thousand Dances," they were saying, "I am a continuation of this tradition," and at the same time, "I am a radical new approach." It was a double-edged sword.

How did you get into punk?

It was pretty standard. I started reading about it in '76 and it sounded really exciting, but I wasn't sure what it was. Then there was this famous TV episode on Weekend in December of '76 where they went to England and they did this show on the Sex Pistols and punk rock. That clinched it for me. Punk was on a ground level. I wasn't really interested in stadium rock shows. I went to a few, but it seemed the opposite of what rock and roll was supposed to be. When you read about the Beatles in Liverpool or Hamburg, there were these cool coffeehouses or clubs where everybody knew each other. There was a scene. That seemed really exciting to me. It was the same excitement that you got when you read about Sun Records or San Francisco in '66. There was community and involvement on a day to day basis, not just sitting on bleachers in a stadium. So when I saw that show about punk rock in England, I was like, "Oh! It's a community. You can touch and feel it on a human level!"

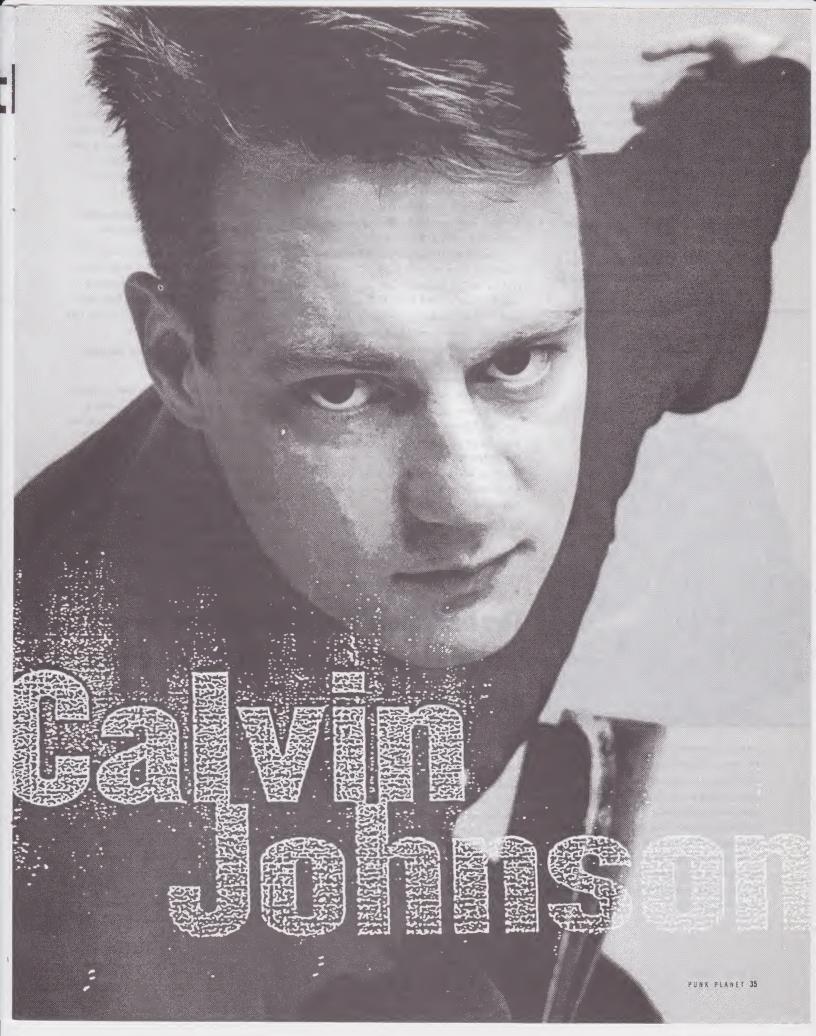
So TV turned you into a punk?

At that time, you either were Led Zeppelin or you were covering them in the local bar. It seemed really weird that there was nothing

ou sense that Calvin Johnson doesn't suffer fools gladly. The man behind the influential K Records and the bands Beat Happening, the Halo Benders and Dub Narcotic Sound System clearly doesn't have the time or the inclination. He quietly measures his words before he speaks and never gives anything away. Act surprised that the man behind some of the most achingly pretty songs ever to come out of the underground doesn't parade around with his heart on his sleeve and all he will say is, "That's an interesting observation. I just want to put a song together that works and I don't think much beyond that." Press Calvin a little further by asking if his bittersweet attitude toward romance is anyway autobiographical and he ends that line of enquiry with a curt, "I've never analyzed that." If it's a glimpse of Calvin's soul that you want, you might as well quit reading now and listen to his songs.

The laconic godfather of Olympia, Washington's perpetually vibrant punk scene won't even pimp his personal history for a little added street credibility. There is the famous story about how Kurt Cobain got a tattoo of the K logo after Calvin offered to pay the price for anyone willing to undergo the inking. Asked to supply details about this episode and his friendship with Cobain (prior to the saint of grunge's move to Seattle) and Calvin stops the conversation before it starts with a blunt declaration, "That's not a subject I like to discuss." By his tone, you understand that he is exceedingly serious. But even if Calvin isn't interested in building a cult of personality around his considerable achievements and influence, he is not exactly at a loss for words when it comes to talking about the label he founded in 1984. What interests him is the way in which regional music scenes develop outside of the commercial mainstream in the US and how an inspired and well-run indie label can facilitate their growth. The fact that this summer K Records will issue their 100th release (the actual figure is higher but K didn't start numbering 'till the early '90s) is proof positive that he walks the walk as well as talks the DIY talk.

Interview by David Grad



in between. The difference between then and now was that everyone had to piece it together themselves. There was no fanzine network; there was no Internet. Everyone had to put it together on their own, wherever they were. You scoured the media, looking for these little pieces and putting everything together in your mind. Of course, you were getting it filtered, because you knew that the mainstream media didn't know what they were talking about.

But wasn't that cooler than having it presented to you on a platter?

I don't want to romanticize that, because I hate it. I think the fact that we now have net-



works of communication which are quite a bit more efficient is much cooler. Now you have access to tools and information. People have a much better chance of getting to do their work and getting it heard. Things have never been better. Just because there are millions of terrible records coming out... Well, there was a lot back then too. But now, if someone is doing something good, they have a better chance of surviving and being heard then they ever did.

How did you move from fan to participant?

A friend of mine was doing this class called Radio for Everyone, which was sort of a training program to get on the air at KAOS. I had picked up a few punk records at that point and I thought, "I can get a show and be the only person playing punk rock." I was completely unaware that there were already people there who had been playing punk for years. When I got to the station, the people who were involved with independent music had taken it beyond a punk level to this idea that all music should be independent. They weren't saying, "Richard Hell is cool." They were saying, "This obscure new record from Indiana is cool." That changed everything. It didn't exactly fit in with my ideas, but it radicalized them to the point that playing the B-52s six months before everyone else did was not as cool as playing Half Japanese when nobody was ever going to. I remember the first time I met the music director, Half Japanese was his example of a great band-that was after they had put their first single out. I also got hooked into Op magazine, [later called Option] which had just started publishing when I first started in 1978.

So you started having access.

"Access," is an important word. One of the differences between then and now is that there was no access to a lot of music. You

Who were the early punk bands in Olympia?

I never saw the earliest bands, which existed between 1975-77—Monster X and Planet Zero. I can't remember all of them. I got the feeling that some of those groups were more on the experimental side. There were a lot of different sources for the people coming into this thing, which then was kind of amorphous. Anyone who was interested in something different was involved.

People often forget that at its inception, punk rock was not a style. It was an approach.

That's something we've carried on at K. We have never been too concerned with fitting into a genre—it's about people expressing themselves. That's what punk was first about. It's about creativity. It's not about fitting into molds, it's about breaking them.

When did you first pick up a guitar and start writing songs?

When I was 13 or 14, I tried to start playing the guitar and writing songs. But I didn't really get into it until I was 17—that was when I started playing in bands. I had this band called the Beach Heads at Olympia High School in '79. When I was in DC, I tried to get something going, but I never could. Then, when I got back to Olympia I was like, "I'm really going to do it." I had this band the Cool Rays for about six months. They were important to me because I was learning fast. It was a very big, unwieldy band with five people. It really made me feel that I didn't

The bad thing about hardcore was that it instrument well enough to play fast, do away from that Half Japanese or Germs

would read about it, but you would never hear it. I had never heard The Ramones, The Clash, Patti Smith, the Velvet Underground, the MC5, or the Stooges. Then, all of a sudden all this music that I read about was available. It was a great education. I couldn't drive, but when I could get a ride, I would go to Seattle and see shows. I saw the Avengers that way. Then of course there were bands at Evergreen that I hadn't been aware of, so I got hooked into that scene as well.

want to be in such a big group. It wasn't cohesive enough for me. I wanted to start from scratch and take a much simpler approach to music.

Sounds like you were laying the groundwork for Beat Happening.

I was heading there. When Beat Happening began, I was playing music with Stella Marrs. She was playing drums and I played guitar. We never got any songs, but I had some words. I couldn't play guitar and sing at the same time. We played a bunch of

shows but Stella didn't have a drum set. Usually we would just borrow somebody else's. ¶ When Stella decided to go away, I thought that maybe I should take it up a notch and get somebody who was more of a rock drummer in order to be more of a rock band. So I started working with this woman Laura. She recommended Heather from Supreme Cool Beings, who was a drummer who wanted to play guitar. ¶ We never practiced; our shows were pretty much all improv. I had a few songs kind of worked out in my head, Heather would play something, Laura would play something and it worked out pretty well. We did three parties. Bruce was putting together the last Sub Pop tape and he had asked us to record something, so we decided to figure something out. We ended up coming up with a few songs. Then Laura moved away in 1983.

Were you called Beat Happening at this point?

No, just Laura, Heather and Calvin. I had the name Beat Happening, but I hadn't applied it. Laura moved away and we decided to carry on. We had a couple of different people play drums. It really pointed out the shortcomings of our improvisational format. There was a spontaneous combustion that could happen, but you could also fall on your face. This was the first time we experienced the latter. It was sobering. We began to think, "Maybe there is something to this practicing thing." Then Bret moved to Olympia, and it was going to be just him,

important. As long as we had the songs worked out in our minds, then you went on stage and made it happen. Besides, I wasn't really into practicing because I thought music should be of the moment. If you practice, you're destroying it. ¶ We were also different because we didn't have any equipment. We didn't have a drum set until 1990, we just borrowed stuff. I had a guitar, and Bret got one at a garage sale for twelve dollars. He still has the same one and uses it in D+. I felt Beat Happening was just us and shouldn't be defined by equipment. If we were just beating on a garbage can, that was Beat Happening. It was about the power of being together. And that was very important because sometimes people's reaction was rather strong, and it was necessary to persevere through difficulties.

Do you mean that the reaction was negative?

Sometimes. People couldn't just dislike us—they had to hate us, and they had to let us know that. Which was fine, because it's nice to see that people are alive out there. People would turn the power off and take our borrowed instruments away, screaming at us.

What were they responding to?

The idea that if you were going to be a band, you needed to meet certain requirements about what happens when you appear on stage, and how you have to behave. Audiences

Germs idea of just getting up there and making an ass of yourself.

You were also writing love songs, which was not considered very punk at the time.

My responsibility was to sing those songs. I felt like the politics were in the process, not in the content. I felt like I was just being myself, and that's what punk rock was all about.

But you were writing love songs.

I don't think I was writing love songs, I was writing songs about whatever occurred to me. I don't think I have ever written a love song in my entire life. There were lots of people who wrote love songs. I was looking at all of underground music, not necessarily punk rock. I saw all of it as a whole, like Sweet Honey in the Rock and dance hall stuff that was coming out of Jamaica then, such as Yellowman, Eek-A-Mouse, and Sister Nancy. To me, those artists were tied together by a common thread, they were people who were speaking from the heart. They were doing their own thing, in their own scene. That was the same thing we were doing in Olympia. We were doing it our own way and they were doing it their own way, in the Bronx, in Wales and Jamaica.

So even if you weren't well loved, you felt a part of your local scene?

There wasn't really a scene. There were no shows—we played at our friend's parties, but we mostly played for each other. I was-

switched things around. Suddenly, you had to play your all these time changes, and drum really hard. It really took idea of just getting up there and making an ass of yourself.

Heather and me. We were going to be a little more focused. I don't think people ever understood this, but what happened after that was what always happened to us: When Bret moved to Olympia, Heather proceeded to move to Seattle. I don't know if there was ever a moment when we all lived in Olympia at the same time.

That may have been the secret to your success.

It worked great for a long time. We felt that the spontaneous aspect was the most

were offended when we didn't meet those requirements, or when we tried to alter them. A lot of them were musicians who reacted very violently, which was great because that was what punk rock had been about five or six years earlier. But the punk rock scene had become so codified. The bad thing about hardcore was that it switched things around. Suddenly, you had to play your instrument well enough to play fast, do all these time changes, and drum really hard. It really took away from that Half Japanese or

n't old enough to go to shows, but even if I was the right age, I still wouldn't play them because I thought that they should be allages. I was always told, "There is nobody under twenty-one that'd go to shows anyway." But my theory was that if you had an allages gig, the kids would come. That's what happened with the Wipers show. They played in an allages space that was widely advertised, and all these kids showed up. We were amazed.

Is that the kind of thing that you meant when Beat

Happening would sing about "the revolution"?

The whole concept of decentralizing the music industry is very political, because it's about taking control of your own life and the means of communication. I see that very much in line with what KAOS was about. It was a community radio station, where you had access to technology so the voices that were being shut out of the mainstream media had a place to be heard. It introduced the idea that what was happening within your community was important, that you should be in touch with your own community and that you should support your own community. At KAOS and Op magazine, it was about supporting independent culture and decentralizing it, allowing artists and fans direct contact, by supplying addresses and letting people be in touch with each other. That's why K's access to tools, technology and information is what independent music should be about. It's about decentralizing the system, so that people are buoyed rather them weighed down by the oppressive, centralized nature of the entertainment industry.

Going back to K Records, I'm curious why you initially started as a cassette label.

I was helping Bruce Pavitt on Subterranean Pop fanzine and we did a cassette issue of Sub Pop #5. It was wildly popular. Bruce's idea for Sub Pop was pretty radical at the time. He wanted to concentrate on under-

Sub Pop and apply them to our community in Olympia. There was a label called Mister Brown that had put out a couple of singles, but I wanted to put out a local cassette.

That's how K got started

Why cassettes?

I liked that idea because it was so populist. The problem with making a record was that you had to get \$1000.00 in order to make 1000 records and then what did you do with them all? You'd sell 300, give away 200 and still have 500 sitting there—it seemed pretty hopeless. But you could record a cassette, dub off fifteen and sell them at your shows. That was more oriented toward our scene, because nobody knew or cared about what we were doing.

K's first release was the Supreme Cool Beings.

They were a group that played a lot of parties. They performed on my radio show and a friend of theirs taped it. It sounded good, so we made it into a cassette release. It was all very spontaneous. We did mail order, tried to sell it to distributors—hardly any took it—and sold it to local stores on consignment. It was the most exciting thing that had ever happened in my life. We sold maybe ninety or hundred copies.

Why did you decide to call the label K?

It just seemed like the best name at the time. But I really think that all this stuff is less important than what happened later. The It seems like rhetoric, but I think about that all the time. Decentralizing pop culture means a lot to me. Running K has been an experiment in doing that. It's been an experiment putting out our own records and developing a local scene and artistic community. My musical development intertwined with this quite a bit. I wasn't capable of just sitting down and being a person who just made music. I could only do it in the context of this broader scope. ¶ It has only been in the last four or five years that I've been capable of concentrating on music solely, even though I'm involved in K everyday. For some reason, I've never seen myself as a musician, but more as a person who made music, who was a fan and wanted to participate. K was my way of being involved, even more than making music was. At K I was able to work with people I really admired and learn from them. My goal was to observe people create and then take what they've done and make a record out of it. The funnest part is to see how people work and relate to each other and to the rest of the world.

When did you see K first taking off?

We were doing cassette-only releases until '87. During that time, Olympia was developing a local scene. It really came into being around 1984 with a club called the Tropicana. That's when local bands started to happen. But I felt that it wasn't until '87 that we really began to be effective. We start-

K's access to tools, technology and information is what It's about decentralizing the system, so that people down by the oppressive, centralized nature of the

ground pop music from the Midwest and Northwest, which were two totally ignored areas. We were a little frustrated that we were writing about this music but nobody could hear it, so we came up with this cassette issue in '81. Bruce had his own aesthetic, his own way of doing things and he always had the magic touch. It was a very successful fanzine—he sold thousands of these cassettes. But I was into a different aspect, I was really excited about our local scene. I wanted to take the concepts behind

things that are happening now are much more exciting. Nobody ever asks what happened in the interim. That's much more important, because it has meant taking those concepts that were there at the beginning and applying them to everyday life. Their application has been much more interesting to me than their development.

Okay, you have the ball. Run with it.

I had these ideas from KAOS and Op. Sub Pop used to say "Decentralize pop culture." ed the International Pop Underground series of singles with Beat Happening, Girl Trouble, the Few, Mecca Normal, the Cannanes and two bands that were supposed to do singles but never did, who were nonetheless important to the development of K: The Melvins and The Screaming Trees. ¶ That's when we started doing small town tours and began networking in a regional way. We were playing all ages shows in Mt. Vernon, Corvallis, Bellingham, Ellensburg and Eugene. Getting out into the region, exploring it, meeting other bands

and people in those towns was really crucial. Those were the places where people were coming up with interesting musical combinations, so we decided to forget about Seattle and Portland.

Do you see that creativity as a product of isolation?

Absolutely. That was why there were great blues and soul singers in the South who developed their own style, in their own areas, because they had no other influences. The regional approach to music is the way American music developed and I saw what we were doing as living proof of it.

Isn't that regional focus a casualty of greater access and the Internet?

That's true, but people are always going to be weird and figure out their own shit. It's just going to happen in a different way.

What was behind the International Pop Underground Festival in '91?

We were doing those small town tours. Beat Happening had also toured the country several times. Through K, I had been in touch with a lot of bands and scenes around America and the world. It seemed like there were people all over doing similar things. I thought it would be neat to have a place for them to get together and all hang out.

'91 was supposed to be "the year that punk broke," but in retrospect it seems that the IPU festival really marked the end of that era. million records, it doesn't effect our immediate environment.

You mentioned Bratmobile—would you agree that K was a seminal force behind Riot Grrr!?

No. We were definitely here though. Riot Grrrl itself is a pretty amorphous movement. But I think it's a social one more than it is a musical movement. A lot of times, when there's a social movement that might be associated with music, people try to make it fit in by calling it a genre. I never saw it that way.

But it was a reaction to sexism in the scene.

The women involved were part of the underground music scene. They took its energy and power and worked positively with it to change the things they didn't like about society by creating a space for people like themselves, whereas some people take scene energy and use it in negative, misogynist ways that mirror society's woes

The Olympia scene in general seems like a reaction to the excesses of hardcore.

The problem is that when people are creative and come up with new ideas, it's perceived as a movement or genre and it is often followed by other people who grab onto the gang mentality aspects of that movement. Then it becomes nothing more than another sporting event. Punk rock started out as being an expression of creativity and turned into a soccer rally. That's

It sounds like autonomy is important to you.

My goal for K was that we'd always be completely autonomous. Even when we were doing co-releases, the ultimate goal was to finance the manufacturing of our own releases and distribute them ourselves.

And you succeeded.

We sell to a lot of distributors. And we're in charge of our own distribution as opposed to having an exclusive distribution arrangement with someone. That is what we had in the past and it wasn't satisfactory because you are never going to be somebody else's priority. We have to be a priority because we think



independent music should be about. are buoyed rather them weighed entertainment industry.

Nevermind came out less then a month later and the underground was never the same again.

I don't agree. It was the middle. A lot of the people who were there had been doing stuff for a number of years before and would continue for a few years afterwards—like Bratmobile. I don't see it as the end of the underground. The underground is a strong as ever. What happened in the music industry had no effect on what we were doing. All our friends' bands were still playing to fifty people a year later. If Pearl Jam sells six

why skate punk is the most bland and boring music in the world. The people doing it are coming from sports, where the point is to show how good you are at skating—it's not about being creative. ¶ During the eighties, a lot of music that was touted as underground was really nothing other than a microcosm of the mainstream. There was nothing about it that challenged the modus operandi of society. I think it's much more interesting if you're taking on society, even if it's not in a direct way.

what we're doing is the most important thing in the world.

Are you still going to be running K records ten years from now?

I don't know how to answer that question except to say that when you're seventeen, there are all these things you'd like to do. Nineteen years later you realize that you haven't done half of them, so it seems like there's still a lot of work to do.



Submission Hold has come to be known as a band with something to say, and a nice way of saying it. Emphasizing honest communication to counter the rampant alienation in our society, their records and their live performance show a clear commitment to breaking down the barriers in our lives.

I recently had a lovely chat with Submission Hold's Jen, Steve and Andy about language, activism, and the importance of having fun. They embark on a massive North American tour in the year 2000—that is, if the whole enchilada doesn't go down the Y2K drain first.

Interview by Jon Strange

I think Submission Hold is known for taking pretty clear political stances, particularly lyrically. I think that's really exciting given the current climate in the punk rock scene of declining political involvement.

Jen: We were talking about that recently, and we came to the conclusion that we are absolutely, IOO percent outside of what the trend is. We are doing something that most people are not doing, or are not into—we talk about our lyrics when we play, give out lyric sheets and our lyrics are almost IOO percent politically motivated. Though they're not usually these cliched political lyrics,—we try and delve a little bit deeper into political issues. But if anyone ever says that we're into this to be trendy, then boy howdy, they're barking up the wrong tree.

A lot of people are talking about your lyric sheets in your latest record, Waiting For Another Monkey To Throw The First Brick, and the translations into so many different languages. When did you first decide to do that?

Steve: We started doing the translations because in Canada, a lot of punk kids' first language is French, and in the Southern US, a lot of kids speak Spanish

And it grew from there?

Steve: Yeah. We had a friend who did German...

Jen: We released CD in Europe, and we were under the impression that a lot of people there speak English and German, so we decided to go with French, English, and German. Since then, we've had someone approach us about translating them into Japanese. Who knows when it will end—it's getting completely out of hand!

Soon you'll have 200 page CD inserts.

Jen: English is the language of money; it's the language of power, colonialism and imperialism. I think it's important to acknowledge that there are other ways to communicate that are just as valid and equally as important. In the punk and hardcore scene in North America, it seems a lot of people don't want to acknowledge that other cultures and other vibrant ways of communication exist. I've heard a lot of people say that they don't listen to music if it comes from another country. I've even seen reviews in this very magazine, as well as other large magazines, complaining about the fact that they couldn't make head nor tails of the lyrics. I don't think it's incumbent on people from other countries to go outside of their mother language to try to get across a message to people. I think it's time to open up and acknowledge so many different ways of communicating. ¶ I myself was in the same boat, up until a couple of years ago. I had a really hard time listening to bands that didn't sing in English-it didn't speak to me. Now that I've gotten over that barrier, I find that most of the music I listen to now is not in English. It just opens you up to-obviously-a whole new world of music. There's so much going on out there that's just absolutely fantastic.

I think you're right, in that English is the language of imperialism and in this country it's the language of privilege. I think that sometimes it's lip service that punks are trying to challenge the levels of privilege that they come from. The privilege of being an English speaker is something that isn't really ever questioned.

Jen: I have a little bit of luck in that, since I speak French, so I already have another language under my belt. Also since French is a romance language, I can speak a little Spanish and Italian, which helps a little bit as well.

When you talk about communication, it's not just an issue of educating people about certain political issues, but of communicating in order to search for solutions. Your song "His Master's Voice" talks about the similar plots we see in history, and ends with the line, "I wrote a story with a brand new ending." I like that emphasis on not just what's fucked up in this world, but on the idea of a vision, of envisioning something new that we can make happen.

Steve: You pretty much nailed it. I found that I was reading a lot of political and revolutionary history, and it seemed like we were fighting the same struggles again, over and over

throughout history. It ends the same every time we—the underprivileged, the leftists—have been getting our asses kicked for time immemorial. It's frustrating. We don't seem to learn from our mistakes. Of course, a lot of that has to do with the power structure, they manipulate that so that we don't learn radical history, and we constantly feel alienated from our past. So when we do discover what we consider to be new ideas, we often don't realize that they're firmly entrenched in history. We should be building upon those ideas rather than reinventing them.

Jen: But on the flip side, it's also inspirational to read about these things and find that there were people who came before us, who had so much impact, and whose stories give you hope and inspiration. We might not be much further along in the struggle, but we're not alone. Throughout history, there have been people who have fought, and I find that inspirational. There have always been people fighting against what is unjust and what is wrong in the society that goes on around us.

Steve: When we look at history, it seems like circles of radical thought do tend to fall back into the same patterns. It's the same rhetoric, and the same methods of struggle. We need to try new things, and open ourselves up to new ideas, even if they aren't already proven, or popular within radical circles.

In another song on the same record, you refer to the common leftist ideal that workers should control the means of production. As you say in the explanation to the song, that would leave us still working in factories, still dealing with the problems of mass production. Having control over it is a big step, but that can't be the end. There is a lot of inspiring history, and certainly that needs to be paid some attention, but that can't be the end of it. We do need to have new visions.

Jen: Also, for someone to have that vision, it's not a requirement that they know about Kropotkin and Goldman and a bunch of bearded white guys who lived in the past. It's not necessary that they know everything those guys said, or what time of day they took a dump. There seems to be a that in anarchist circles and in leftist circles, there's a feeling of if you don't know about these things, then you aren't justified in opening your mouth. That's bullshit. That's totally intellectualizing something that, in a lot of ways, is simply human emotion and common sense. I don't





think we ever want to give the impression that you have to be a smarty-pants in order to communicate, or to have that vision to try to make the world a better place. It begins with a want, a desire to do that.

Steve: When I wrote that song, my only understanding was just that workers take over and run factories. My initial thought was, "Well, that's nice, but still crappy."

Jen: That seems to be a human trait—to take something and just analyze one part of it, instead of looking at it as a whole. We never look at the interconnectedness of things, of how they all work together. We need to recognize the repercussions that can come from too narrow of a focus. Nothing is so simple as just black and white—there's a lot of gray, a lot of connections we don't even see.

As you talk about connections, the notion that "the personal is political" comes to mind. I think there's too much emphasis on that—I like to also think about it in reverse, that the political is personal. We should understand how the political visions that we have tie into people's everyday lives. I think that end of things is really neglected.

Jen: Like that bumper sticker, "Think Globally, Act Locally." Well, that's great, but act globally too! Why pick one over the other? Of course there's only so many hours in a day, and so much that one person can do, but try to get the bigger picture and apply it to your life, and do as much as you can.

In terms of looking at the bigger picture, and a lack of vision, where do you think the punk and hardcore scene is? What kind of expectations do you have from it? Why did you pick that as your audience?

Andy: It's funny, we don't really know why. When we were kids we got into punk, playing punk music, and setting up punk shows, but now when people tell us, "You sound like so-and-so," we've usually never heard of whoever they're comparing us to. I'm totally stuck in the '80s. When I think of punk, I think of spiky mohawks at demos and I know it's not like that anymore.

Jen: For me, it's still very much about DIY networking. There are communities of people all over the world that have one thing in common, and that's punk. I think that's really cool. But we're not hip—we don't know who the hot new bands are, or what the new outfit is. And you know what? I'm really glad about that because to be caught up in that is

just to be caught up in a cycle of crap. ¶ In terms of your question of what our expectations are of the hardcore community, and why we chose that as our audience, that definitely wasn't a real decision, it's just where we come from and that's the audience that chooses to listen to us. We don't try to target any specific audience—whoever the hell wants to listen to us can listen, as far as we're concerned. The reason we stay in that scene is the DIY aspect of it. For us, with our politics and the kind of music that we're playing, they're aren't a lot of options. Who the hell are we gonna book with that's not an asshole? Well, it's gonna have to be the punks-there just aren't that many options. But it's not like we aren't having a hell of a good time anyway!

Jen: For all of its problems, and all of the criticisms I have of the punk and hardcore community, I still find it really exciting to be a part of. I still like that recognition factor that comes when I'm in an alien city and I see a punk. I get a little thrill, knowing that there's someone I could go over and talk to, and that I'd have a place to stay. I like that aspect of the community. ¶ It seems to me that the people involved in this scene are really open to each other. I think there's a lot of really idealistic and wonderful people in punk and hardcore, and I consider myself one of those idealistic people. I haven't lost all hope yet, though I have become more cynical and jaded as years go by. There are so many vibrant people involved who are still working toward some kind of change, and that's the kind of atmosphere I like to be in. ¶ Our music itself is not your standard 3-chord punk. We don't fall into any one genre, and I like that. We seem to appeal to a broader spectrum of people across all the different sub-genres of punk and hardcore. I really like that we can transcend all those barriers, and I find it really hopeful.

Steve: I want to add something to Jen's answer, which carefully avoided criticism. I'll throw in one criticism: the punk scene in the US and Canada tends to be a very young scene. People seem to get out of it after they're past college age—not everybody by any means, but a lot of people. After being over in Europe, I've realized that it doesn't have to be that way. I can't really figure out the reasons behind that. I often wonder where the hell everybody went. I see people come and go, and while some people remain, so many disappear. It's kind of sad.

Jen: I think a lot of people get into punk and find a whole world beyond it, and use punk as a catalyst to get involved in other things. We have friends who have left the world of punk music behind, but are still extremely active in political circles.

Steve: But we probably have even more friends who have just completely dropped out.

I think we should change our criteria for what defines someone as a punk from who you see at the shows, and start focusing on what people are doing. So many people lose interest in the music, but take the ideas further. ¶ I want to talk about the way these ideas often manifest themselves within the scene. Too often in the hardcore scene, political views are expressed with such anger. There's a lot to be angry at, but I find it so disempowering. If you can figure out a way to have fun and still express your beliefs and your politics, that gives so much more power and vibrancy to your beliefs.

Jen: There's this weird notion in punk that you're only allowed to express one emotion: aggressive anger. I am so much more than that. Everyone is so much more than that, and has so many more layers to them than just anger. When we played in Europe, a friend of ours in France said "I think you're the first political band who I've seen express more than one emotion. You guys smiled when you played. You were still angry, and said a lot of things that were politically motivated, and meant to stir up anger, but you were smiling and having fun." I think that is so important to recognize. We're just human, we're trying to get by, and we're trying to glean whatever fun we can out of this struggle. It's an important balance.

Steve: I don't think you can maintain the level of anger that is expected in punk for a long period of time. When I was younger, I was a pretty fuckin angry guy. It was so unhealthy-it manifested itself in parts of my life where I didn't want it. I'm still angry about a lot of things, but I try to also look around and see positives in things. I think if we're going to sustain ourselves in being in opposition to what's going on in the world, it can't just be based on anger. We have to have positive elements as well. We have to be proactive and be able to have fun. We have to be a lot more diverse with our emotions, rather than focus only on the negatives all the time. There are a lot of negatives-we're

all aware of them, and we need to keep talking about them—but we can't afford to get stuck in them.

Andy: Look what it did to Henry Rollins.

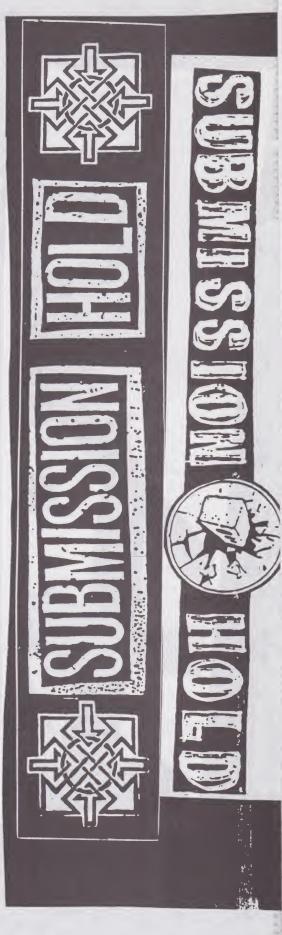
Steve: Well the thing with Rollins is that he's made a career out of it, so he can't get out of it at this point.

Andy: He's contractually bound to his anger.

You talked about being so angry when you were younger, and I think a lot of people who got into punk were in a similar situation. I think that atmosphere of anger really hinders the punk scene's potential. I try to always keep in mind the notion that love is an act of resistance—by having fun and coming together, you're challenging the forces that keep us alienated and overcoming them.

Jen: When many serious and politically minded people plan demos and direct actions, they often want to keep fun and humor out of it. There is a lot of stuff going on that's interjected with a sense of fun, and I think that's completely necessary. When you're trying to reach a wider audience, it's going to be much more effective to use humor and fun than it is to put on a straight face and march around with a placard. I think so many people look at traditional demos and go, "Jeez, what a boring bunch of assholes. Why would I want to get involved in anything they're doing?" There are acts of resistance going on all over the world where they're using puppets, facepainting, dancing, and music out on the streets. I think that's the kind of thing that will get bigger and have a greater effect. Little kids see those things and say, "Mummy, Daddy, lets go over to the street party!" That's the way to do it. That's the way to brainwash the little buggers!

Jen: I think it's really important to not limit yourself to anyone's definition—including your own—of what being punk or hardcore is. There's so much more to life than those things. A whole world is out there that doesn't understand anything about punk and hardcore. We need to take what's good from this community and apply it to that "evil" outside world. It seems that there are a lot of people in this community with blinders on, and they can only see somebody if they're equally involved in the scene. We need to take what we learn within this community and apply it to the world at large.







ORI



"DISINFORMATION

spores are being beamed from many evil forces," Dr. Markus Spangelstein explains, "including the evil conspiracy forces. These spores can actually go directly into your brain and cause you to do things you would not otherwise do, or at least do things that aren't in line with the main strategy of Operation Re-Information. And that is why we like the spoon," he continues, "because we originally used it as a parabolic reflector to deflect those awful disinformation streams."

If anyone should know about disinformation spores, it would be Dr. Spangelstein. Along with Drs. Evertt T. Spectt, Za Za Triplex and other—nameless—musical agents, Spangelstein runs Operation Re-Information, a semi-secret Powerbook-armed anti-organization dedicated to satirizing the so-called Age of Information. These amusingly alienated computer geeks have more than just wrestled electronic music culture away from techno. They also have the dubious distinction of being the world's first purveyors of laptop rock.

While such efforts may be looked at askance in the guitar-wielding business that is punk rock, ORO takes punks DIY teachings into the digital age—by applying it to software design. Back-to-Basics, the program that fuels ORI's laptops was designed by the band from the ground up. Using Back-to-Basics, ORI process what they find useful for their own program of subversion and create a new, higher form of rock and roll out of all of it: Re-Information. The results of their labors can be heard on a number of CDs, the most recent being their Vinyl Communications debut full-length, *Universal Standard* 84000.

Employing a rather dated device for information streaming, the telephone, I recently talked with the good doctors of ORI about some of the central themes in the re-information universe, including taxes, the advantages of steel and *Knight Rider*.

Interview by John Brady

When we set up this interview, you were all in the midst of filing your taxes. I was wondering if the IRS has separate forms for agents of reinformation, or do you just file the 1040 like everyone else?

Spangelstein: No, we actually have to use the red phone to do our taxes.

So you phone them directly to the President?

IT'S INTERESTING

Spangelstein: Well, the president of the accounting firm that we contract out to.

Triplex: We have five accountants and ten lawyers working for us.

Why is that?

Spectt: Because there are a lot of things to keep track of, like the liability issues and the offshore contracts that involve not only US tax law but also Malaysian tax law. There are all sorts of tax laws we have to keep track of, not to mention the entire Ori-tax structure, which is actually new to the US this year.

Triplex: Through the Ori-tax system, we skim a percentage of all the salaries in the United States for our own benefit.

Really? Is there an Ori-tax deduction that I can use to get out of paying my taxes?

Triplex: No, we only take people's money.

I really liked your new album, Universal Standard 84000. How long did it take you to produce?

Spangelstein: Way too long.

Triplex: The material has been around for a while. Some of the stuff was randomly recorded over the last year and then edited at the lab. I would say that it took a couple of months to get the actual album together.

Do you work on the tracks separately or, is it more of a collective effort?

Spectt: It's a collective effort.

Spangelstein: Most of it was recorded live here at the lab.

Triplex: Which is kind of odd given the amount of control that we usually like to have over things.

Spangelstein: We realized that after spending far too long on information control, that we needed to free ourselves from the bogged down nature of extra control that we normally use. So we abandoned our usual recording paradigms and embraced the dynamic power of two-track recording.

It seems to have worked on the album, including the cover of the Knight Rider theme song. Why did you choose that song to cover?

Spectt: Partly as a homage to our tour vehicle, and also because, you have to admit, that as a form of autonomously operating technology, the KITT car did a good job of what it was programmed to do.

Spangelstein: It was one hell of a great computer.

So I assume that you like the Knight Rider David Hasselhof better than the Bay Watch Hasselhof.

Triplex: They're both pretty cute.

Spangelstein: It's interesting that you mention David Hasselhof. We've actually considered approaching him to do some future soundtrack work for his show Bay Watch Nights because it is such a spectacular source of information.

In some ways Universal Standard is a strange album. On the one hand it has a very futurist feel with all of the emphasis on computers and technology. But at the same time given many of the sounds and samples that you use, it has a certain kind of nostalgic sensibility. Is Operation Re-Information nostalgic at heart?

Spangelstein: Part of the reason why the album might come off that way is because a lot of the technology that we use is still rooted in '80s hardware. Many of the songs on the album are based on the Commodore 64 computer. In addition, we have a lot of analog synthesizers—too many analog synthesizers. And, of course, we have a lot of digital synthesizers. This means that there are a lot of possible sounds we can choose to manipulate. It takes a long time for the necessary information to trickle down through the infosphere to the operation information tracking system. And many of the sounds are more than ten years old. That is probably why you get that older, more nostalgic sound.

It's difficult to get a sense of how big Operation Re-information is. How many agents actually work at ORI?

Spangelstein: It's a multi-tiered organization, which means it's hard to quote an exact number of agents. At the top level, I would say that it is at least I,200.

How do you go about choosing agents? Do they come to you or do you recruit them?

Spectt: It's actually a little bit of both. We have an application process, but we also do some recruiting. We have several different retreats during the year to recruit agents.

DAVID HASSELHOF...

Spangelstein: There's an ORI-fair that happens a couple of times a year where we have agents go out to universities and play schools around the country to recruit possible new members. We have no age limit here at ORI-headquarters, it's purely expertise-based. The whole process does involve a lot of paper work, though. Applicants, for example, have to fill out at least a ten-page report detailing how they would help us expand the envelope of Re-Information.

What exactly is Re-Information?

Spectt: Re-Information is a tool that we have been developing for the last ten years, although the actual research goes back much further than that. In the last few years we have been developing re-information into a set of solutions, some of which are hardware based, some of which are software based and most of which are information control based. Of course, the information control based solutions can take the form of either software or hardware. And then there is also wetware, which is a complex process involving chemical based computers that can be injected or even applied.

Spangelstein: You can also ingest them.

Spectt: Re-Information is a tool, really, it's a technology that takes many shapes and forms and many processes and price levels.

Spangelstein: At the same time, it's a scientific theory. We use it to develop many tools because here at Operation Re-Information we like to have our hands on all kinds of information control tools. We use these tools to further the ideas and science of Operation Re-Information, which of course is re-information and information control dynamics.

That seems very clear to me, but it raises the question of the difference between re-information and information.

Spangelstein: Re-Information is a just-in-time solution to value-added information.

I see. So it isn't just the opposite of information.

Spangelstein: Oh no, not at all! It has many of the powers of information and takes the forms of all kinds of information including: disinformation, which is the most popular, misinformation, un-information, non-information, pre-information, reverse information, de-information and negative information. All of these forms of information are wrapped up together in the powerful next stage of this information control dynamic that manifests itself in re-information.

Triplex: Re-Information is really about taking information and restructuring it for your own needs. Anyone can use the re-information techniques to make information work for them.

As long as they are affiliated with Orilabs.

Triplex: Well, we would rather take credit for it, so that we can profit off of their endeavors.

Spangelstein: Or at least use their ideas to further our own goals.

All of that sounds rather elitist.

Spangelstein: We are the elite of the elitist crop here at Operation Re-Information

Is Pittsburgh really the best place for the location of your operation? I would have thought that somewhere closer to the heart of the information society would be better, like Silicon Valley or Seattle, for example.

Triplex: Pittsburgh has a more flexible information society. In a lot of those bigger places, people think they have the right information. Here in Pittsburgh, there is a looser information structure that allows us to really mold the information and restructure it for our own needs.

Spangelstein: It's very possible and very easy when you're in a center of information like Silicon Valley to fall into adverse themes of information control—disinformation also abounds in very popular information epicenters like that. We selected Pittsburgh after many years of research because Pittsburgh gets one of the lowest information scores out of any location on the globe. There is actually less information going in and out of Pittsburgh, which means it's the perfect place to start the new frontier of information control.

Spectt: Besides, it was built on steel.

Spectt: Anything with a steel infrastructure has got to be susceptible to Re-Information.

Spangelstein: All of our laptops are made completely out of steel. They're extremely heavy.

I would imagine. Speaking of Silicon Valley and laptops, you recently did a demonstration at Apple Computers. How did that come about? Did they come to you or did you approach them?

Spectt: They came to us.

Spangelstein: Of course they came to us. They realized—and this is actually a true fact-he value of our Back-to-Basics software. Back-to-Basics is a technology that we developed here at Orilabs. It's really what helped to turn Apple around. You remember all of the economic hardship that they were going through a couple of years back? Well, once they embraced the Back-to-Basics technology, they were able to gain a larger share of the market and pull themselves out of the hole that they had dug for themselves. Once Steve Jobs understood that Back-to-Basics is the audio presentation technology of the future, he contacted us directly through one of his underlings.

Tell me some more about Back-to-Basics

Spectt: It is a prime example of a Re-Information tool based solution. Re-information provided the fuel to make the software and the software is therefore the tool, based on a need that the ORI sound team had. No other piece of software could do what we needed to do, so Re-Information demanded a solution that resulted in Backto-Basics software.

What exactly does it do?

Spectt: It really enables us to get back to the basics of information control paradigms that have already been established at ORI. It utilizes the very simple but flexible software design created by the Orivac, and initiated by Dr. B. Torian, who is no longer with us. Using the software, we are able to achieve a more streamlined and effective solution to information control for a wider and more susceptible audience.

It is Y2K proof?

Spangelstein: It's even Y6K proof. @

QUESTIONS WITH THE BAND PANDA BEAR

1. When did your band form?

I started playing music when I was about 14 or so.

2. When will it break up?

I think I'll keep playing music for quite a while. I don't see myself ever stopping—I hope I don't, at least.

3. What have you released so far?

Panda Bear is my first real release. I put out a couple tapes and things like that locally when I was younger.

4. Why do you play the music that you play?

Sometimes I suppose I feel like I have to—it feels like the right thing to do. It usually makes me feel the way I'd like to. It's nice sometimes to be able to say things that you don't usually feel comfortable saying. I always have a lot of difficulty playing music when I don't really feel like it. I guess you could say it's a more reactive than proactive process.

5. What is the weirdest thing that has ever happened at a show?

I haven't played too many shows, at least not extraordinary ones. I've always thought it was very strange the way people talk and relate to you after a show—it always feels like a very artificially validating event.

6. What is the best show you've ever played?

I played with a couple of guys at some kid's house in Baltimore. That was probably the best show I've played. I got lost on the way with the drums I was going to play. I was all over the place for a little bit, but I eventually found the place. Nobody really wanted us there—there were only about four or five people watching. The sound was really bad too, but we played anyway. Eventually, I think we just forgot about everything else. I don't remember us playing exceptionally well, but some guy said we sounded like My Bloody Valentine—he was really enthusiastic too.

7. State your purpose.

I'm not exactly sure. I think music is a way of having a conversation with other people without really confronting them. I have difficulties with real conversation sometimes, so I guess playing music is my way of making up for that—it lasts a lot longer too.

8. What were the runner up names for the band?

There's a whole lot. I used to be in a band called The Cartels. I used to be nicodemus for a while, but that was mostly electronic things. I had a lot of names for that electronic stuff—Wyoming Cowboy, the Oar and the Air, Tiawanese Bomb, Lone Lee—a lot of funny things.

9. How do you describe yourself to relatives who have no idea what you play?

I tell a lot of relatives that I play classical music, because I think that's probably what they want to hear. I'll say I play cello or piano, so I don't feel bad about lying.

10. How do you describe yourself to kids in the scene who haven't heard you?

I say that they probably won't like it. I'll say that a lot of it's instrumental, or experimental or something like that. It's difficult for me to say what it is sometimes. I usually just give it to them and let them listen to it on their own.

11. What does the band fight about the most?

I often think a lot of what I do is throwaway stuff. I get mad at myself a whole lot. The biggest fights are over erasing things, I suppose.

12. What is the antithesis of your band?

Maybe 'N Sync or something like that. I don't mean any offense to them. I don't think I'm as good as them, but I think they and I do very different things. They look a lot better than I do.

13. Outside of music and bands, what influences you?

Movies, a lot... art... people... what people say... drugs... pretty girls... my mother and father... France... a lot of things.

14. What is selling out?

Doing anything where your motive conflicts with the natural motive of the action.

15. If you could make a living off your band, would you?

Certainly. I should have listed that in the purpose section.

16. Where do you practice?

At home, in my room. I built a studio with another guy—we play there quite a bit.

17. If you could play on a four-band bill, with any bands that have ever existed, who would you play with and what order would they play?

Me, the Police, Tom Jenkinson, Ultra Bide

18. What goals do you have as a band?

I'd like to be allowed to play for a long time. I'd like for people to think about me or remember what I did.

19. What makes for a good show?

When you get what you expect. When it's as good as you thought it would be. When people feel or think something as a result of the music.

20. If you were to cover a song (that you don't already) what would it be?

Jon Cougar Mellencamp's "Small Town"

Panda Bear c/o Soccer Star Records PO Box 401 Owings Mills, MD 21117-0401





I'd rather it be about things that don't exist anyplace else or that you can't even believe exist at all.

Catch of the Day Mailorder

atch of the Day Mailorder is a total anomaly. It's a punk distro company that doesn't carry a single record or zine. Instead, Catch of the Day carries beautiful arts & crafts items made by punk kids across the globe. Ever since I came across my first copy of the Catch of the Day catalog, I've been intrigued by the concept and by the awesome stuff they carry. I've been meaning to do an interview with Catch of the Day's Tina Herschelman for some time and finally got to do so over the phone this May.

Interview by Dan Sinker

One thing that's always intrigued me about Catch of the Day Mailorder is that it's such an anomaly within the punk scene—I mean, there's really nothing else like it out there. I'm really curious where the idea to start an art and crafts mailorder company came from.

Star Seifert had this idea—she wanted to start a catalog where you could only get things for a limited time and then you wouldn't be able to get 'em. She told me about this idea one day when we were making paper together—or something really corny like that. I thought it was a really great idea and I wanted to help her with it. We put out our first catalog in January of '97. It has progressed into being about handmade, original art and crafts.

Was that what you had initially set out to sell?

When it first started, we didn't really know what it was going to be. The only real concept was that things would cease to be available.

We saw people around us that were working on art that wasn't so focused on music—
Olympia is so extremely focused on music—but there were no systems set up to distribute these things. Also at that time, Jen Smith's Cha-Cha Cabaret was going on here. She

would make a tea cozy and it would somehow make sense with the music at the Cabaret. And whereas there was a system to distribute the music she was making, everything else was not getting distributed. There was no way to get the idea out there. Living in Olympia, starting Catch of the Day seemed to fit together and make sense.

To me, Catch of the Day seems a really uniquely Olympian product. Why do you think it can happen there as opposed to San Francisco or here in Chicago, both of which also have a great deal of active people doing new things? What do you think it is about Olympia that was open to something like Catch of the Day and allowed it to thrive?

Part of it is probably the fact that Olympia is a manageable size. Also, the community is small enough and encouraging enough—it's also really open to what might be considered "amateur art." Some of the things in the catalog I think of as the "Beat Happening of the art world." Olympia has always been accepting of that type of art and has been a real advocate for that type of expression, Catch of the Day got a lot of support here that it might not have gotten elsewhere.

But now you actually feature many artists that aren't from Olympia at all. How has Catch of the Day grown? When you started, I'd imagine that you were fairly local...

Our first issue was basically the all Nikki McClure issue. But after that, there have been a lot of people around the country that have let us send them stacks of catalogs and then they'll distribute them.

The first time I had heard of Catch of the Day was through a mailout I got from Dischord Records that included your catalog.

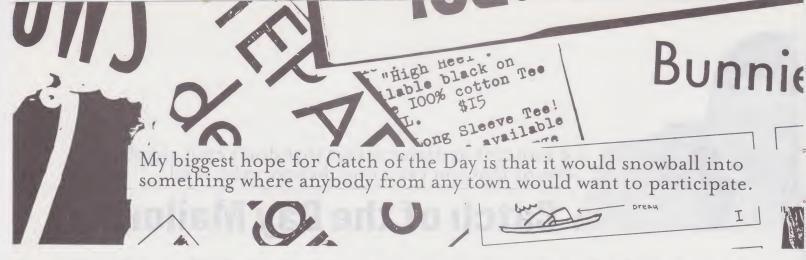
Oh my god, Dischord has been amazing. So has K Records and Kill Rock Stars-they'll put catalogs in almost every order. And a lot of Olympia bands have taken the catalogs around the country on tour. The word got out that way and then people started contacting me. Like Claire Crespo, who is this really amazing artist in LA, sent a sample of her cookbook up. It was so weird and amazing that I wrote her immediately. She just had a show in LA of crocheted hamburgers and French fries and fish & chips plates and a sushi platter-it's all crocheted. Since she made that initial contact with us about the cookbook, we've stayed in contact and now we're going to carry postcards of her crocheted work. It's just grown and grown like that. Word of mouth and weird connections-really strange, odd connections-have helped it grow.

How do you decide what you're going to put in the catalog?

Basically, somebody sends us a sample of their work and if it strikes us as something that we would champion or that we really get a kick out of, we put it in the catalog. It's not even so much about sales, really—although sometimes I think it should be more about sales because it's been really hard to make ends meet lately—I'd rather it be about something else. I'd rather it be about things that don't exist anyplace else or that you can't even believe exist at all. I'd rather it be about that.

That brings up an interesting point. One thing that always strikes me when I get your new catalog is, "How are they possibly be getting by on this stuff?" [laughs]

I don't know! [laughs] Actually, there's usually one thing in every catalog that's a really



big seller. Like Matt Steinke's theraminseverybody wanted one and they sold out instantly. That paid for a large portion of the catalog's printing costs. So far, there's always been one really hot item. But then Matt doesn't feel like making them anymore, so they're gone forever and I've got to figure out something else. ¶ I funnel my own money into it too. But I kind of think of it like this: I see bands and how hard they work and they funnel all this money into equipment and touring and everything. I don't think of this any differently. The chances of a band paying for itself or breaking even is kind of a long shot, but that's not what it's about. I try to keep that in mind and deal with it.

When you send a catalog out, about how many orders are you getting back?

Right after a new catalog comes out, we probably get anywhere from 15-25 orders a week. But that trickles off pretty fast. The last catalog came out back in November or December—we try to get one out every quarter but that didn't work out this time-and now we're probably down to five orders a week. We're starting layout on our new catalog this week and we're trying to get everybody together and get commitments for what's going to be in the catalog and get the pages laid out. I also have a woman down in San Francisco who's building and refurbishing our website. I kind of hope that the website is going to keep orders coming in between catalog printings. If I can keep it to an average of 20 orders a week, I can pay for shipping and printing and rent. ¶ The other thing that helps with cash flow is that I try to set up some kind of store every season. This summer, I'm going to have a store set up in the mezzanine of the Capitol Theater during Yo-Yo Au Go-Go. Every fall in Olympia

there is a thing called "Arts Walk"—it's in downtown Olympia and it's a night where artists get to show their work. Last time we created this faux museum—it was called COMA, the Contemporary Olympia Museum of Art. It was at this place called the Midnight Sun, which is usually a venue for bands to play. Catch of the Day ran the museum store. I look for any opportunity like that to keep the money coming in.

Catch of the Day is the only thing of its kind within the punk scene, and yet it's a struggle to get by. What that really speaks of is the lack of importance put on non-musical art within the punk scene. The scene continuously prioritizes music over any other form of art—it's a shame. How do you think non-musical art falls within the context of punk rock?

I don't know. It just seems to make sense. It's not like Catch of the Day exists in a vacuum. There are people like Miranda July, who is making videos and doing spoken word pieces that are based on science fiction, but somehow it is accepted as a punk rock art form. And then there's Stella Marrs who's a graphic designer/visual artist here in Olympia. She did Girl City back in the '80s, which was a girl art lab. Catch of the Day very much draws on the whole Girl City idea and the things Stella Marrs did before us. I don't think that there has been a very big delineation between the music and the art here in Olympia. I think of it as all fitting together.

I know when we did our Art & Design issue, before we shipped it out, I honestly thought we were committing suicide by putting an issue out there that didn't have a single band in it and was all about art. But coming from an art background, it was really important to me that it

went out there all the same. I was totally blown away by the response we got from it. We got letter after letter from kids saying, "Wow I've felt like I've been working in a vacuum all along and your issue really meant a lot to me." Punk from day one has always been really closely linked to the visual arts, yet that aspect of it has never really risen above the people-working-alone method, That's one thing that Catch of the Day is to me: it's a distribution network. All of a sudden, there's something at a national level that is connecting all these artists. Catch of the Day—for lack of a better term—brings art out on tour. It brings art out of the town its being made in and into other towns.

My biggest hope for Catch of the Day is that it would snowball into something where anybody from any town would want to participate. That it wouldn't just be an Olympia thing, or have this Olympia taint to it. That people from all over would get really excited about it and let it be a vehicle for them.

Do you think that's going to be possible?

I always ask myself how long I should go on struggling. Should I make a timeline; should I set a date? I suppose my biggest hope for Catch of the Day is that it could be my real job-that I wouldn't have to have a second job and do Catch of the Day in my spare time. If it could support me at the little, poverty-level way that I've become accustomed to living, then I would do it forever. I might as well; I really believe in it and it's something that benefits artists and I think can benefit artists everywhere. It's really depressing to think about being confined only to the arena of showing in a gallery—if that's even an arena that's accessible to you. So if I can keep on creating this space for artists to show in-even if it's just a virtual space-then I'll do it for as long as it's fun. @





We like to give the engineers and those who work behind the scenes a certain kind of artistic prominence in order to highlight their contributions.

sphodel Records is a six-year old label split between New York and San Francisco, the thoughtfully cultivated brainchild of partners Naut Humon and Mitzi Johnson. Asphodel's strength lies in its commitment to musical eclecticism, and the kind of investment that it puts into its artists.

Some people may find it hard to define Asphodel's sound, but that's exactly the point. The mission of Asphodel transcends any kind of explicit commitment to a particular kind of sound or genre. Humon hopes to use music to generate new forms of culture. Like many an independent label head over the past ten years, Humon has dedicated himself to trying to overturn the musical status quo. The difference is how he and Asphodel have gone about doing it.

Humon believe's that any indie label's goal ought to be to literally turn everything upside down—to question every kind of precept we bring to the composition and performance of new music. In Humon's universe, engineers become artists, concerts generate new civilizations, and artistic differences establish previously unrecognized similarities between artistic classes such as high art composers like John Cage and lannis Xenakis and groundbreaking DJs like Mixmaster Mike, Rob Swift and Q-bert.

Though one may find it hard to conceive of a coherent company evolving from such a grand aesthetic vision, somehow it all works and the results are nothing short of revolutionary. The proof is Asphodel's unbelievable catalogue, which ranges from the Incredibly Strange Music compilations for Re/Search publications, groundbreaking Illbient records by the likes of DJ Spooky and We, avante-scratchers X-cutioners and Invisibl Skratch Piklz, all the way to Montreal collage composer Francis Dhomont's Frankenstein Symphony and Israeli émigré Badawi's Heretic of Ether.

Humon is quick to point out that many people have contributed to making Asphodel what it is

today, but he certainly merits a great deal of credit for helping guide it in that direction. His own personal history explains where his vision came from.

An accomplished musician and producer in his own right, Naut's recorded works go back thirty years with his first band, Rhythm and Noise, who along with groups like Tuxedomoon and The Residents, once recorded for the seminal Ralph Records label. Along the way, Naut has worked with such artists as Diamanda Galas, with whom he collaborated in the construction of his now 24-year old studio, The Bloody Angle Compound. Not coincidentally, Asphodel released Diamanda's most recent recording, Malediction and Prayer.

Perhaps the essence of Naut's vision is embodied in the series of aptly titled Recombinant concert-events that he put together in 1996. A travelling road show consisting of experimental hip-hop, electronic and audio-visual artists, the Recombinant tour served as the live test vehicle for Naut's re-conceptualization of the indie label as the starting point for the creation of new cultures. While every underground record company aspires to that kind of ideal, the Recombinant event puts that aspiration into a collective artistic practice by aligning disparate types of musicians, from different cultural backgrounds and genres together in the context of a live concert setting. As much as Naut sees these events as transcending the narrow genre confines that small indie record companies traditionally offer, the Recombinant shows are a live example of what his own eclectic label does. It provides a window from which we can observe emerging types of art that result from the combining of genres that were previously deemed unrelated.

I got a chance to talk to Naut about it all and more one Saturday afternoon while we ran errands together in San Francisco.

Interview by Joel Schalit



Asphodel Records

I read somewhere after one of your Recombinant shows that the show's mix of music and visuals represented some kind of overcoming of cultural and class distinctions. Would you agree?

I'd say that the audience demographic definitely reflected that. To answer your question better, though, let's look at the term "Recombinant." It represents an aesthetic application of the term "Recombinant DNA," as it's used in the medical field. In this case, it means primarily the formation in offspring of genetic combinations not present in parents, and secondly, an experience that is different than a cell's component parts.

That's a creative way of explaining your philosophy of 'mixology.'

Exactly. Recombinance represents the mutation of inherited strains of culture. It results in a new culture which is evolved from that which preceded it. We're interested in developing new strains of culture out of stuff that's already been developed. For example, Brian Eno was credited with having brought the term "ambient," to the fore with his Music for Airports series, even though it had been used before that to describe ambient phenomena. Back in the mid-90s we made an offspring term called "Sombient," in order to denote music which was dark and moody as well as being ambient noir: beatless audentities generated by non-traditional instruments that don't depend upon rhythms for their foundation. It's much more soundtrack-like. ¶ The field that we're involved with is what I call the realm of "Audio Cinematics." It involves the putting together of "sonic operational" phenomena as though they were extreme experience chambers. So

instead of putting on a traditional rave-type concert where there are a lot of DJs and that kind of stuff, what we're trying to do is a much more experiential kind of thing. The crucial difference is that it's closer to making a movie than it is writing a song or being in a touring band.

It sounds like an updated version of the psychedelic concert of the '60s rather than it being a version of the kinds of visual experiences we find at rayes.

That's close. Most of a rave's light shows and video installations are more about the decorum surrounding the essence of the show, like the music or the band. What we're trying to do is balance it out a bit more, where the visual experience of an event is as important as the music it may be accompanying. It also gives more credit to those individuals who do that kind of work at concerts too. That's why our head engineer Vance Galloway is considered as much of an artist as the musician he's working with. ¶ We like to give the engineers and those who work behind the scenes a certain kind of artistic prominence in order to highlight their contributions. When the audience is there, it's much more of a team framework that one has to contend with than the so-called "artist" names which brought the audience to the show in the first place. That's probably where observations about the elimination of the distinctions between cultures and classes in these events comes from.

That makes total sense. You have to provide a working environment that can facilitate those possibilities. What role do you play in this?

My own role is as a conductor or a curator of the event. Cinematically speaking, my role could be compared to that of a film director. But ultimately the idea is that there'll be other directors of offshoot events that'll take off from what we've started. To invoke the DNA analogy that I used before, the Recombinant event lays the building blocks for that which can be recombined or replicated. I expect many things to emerge out of this in the future after we've evolved our particular interpretation of a new audio-cinematic language that we're assisting in creating a new vocabulary for.

You're talking about an entirely different way of producing music—a way that sidesteps the typical rock band format.

Not only that, it also sidesteps the traditional orchestral format as well. We want to come up with our version of an "orchestra of the future" that transcends the traditional 19th Century model where you have brass, woodwind and percussive sections—a concept that still predominates today. Creating new kinds of orchestras, where you have electrified string sections, computer workstations, DJs, amplified instruments, VJs and sound sculptors operating mixing equipment, would be drawn into a central pool of recombinance. It's a style of show that's similar to a summit where people interface in altered ways. I wouldn't call it multimedia-I'd refer to it more as specific or selected media because there are certain things that we just don't do. We're just trying to offer another option-a slight twist if you will-of the familiar and the unfamiliar. The concern is to spur interest in such ideas as "remix orchestras," in real time where we use equipment normally associated with studios and take them to the street.

You want the studio to be seen as a musical instrument in much the same way that we'd understand the significance of a guitar or a turntable.

Because of our experience doing such things in the context of running a label and presenting live events, our goal is to develop these prototypes in the form of "Sound Traffic Control." STC is an orchestral hub. It's a metaphor for a sonic airport where different musical cargoes can land, taxi and take off and the audience are passengers on imaginary audio runways amidst the sonic trajectories. What STC does is it operates this computer mixing hub, which is called a "Dub Dashboard" that routes inputs from many different sources which are all morphed in real time. ¶ We want to take a different tact from Ninjatunes-type label showcases, where they feature all their DJs on one bill. Don't get me wrong, I'm a huge fan of what they do, but in terms of what Recombinance is all about, we're talking about another approach. We're taking about using STC as a virtual nerve center and working with artists who represent many different labels. It's very simple. We just want to create a show that we'd like to go see. We want to put together various kinds of artists on a single lineup, where different sorts of collaborations emerge that you couldn't predict happening ahead of time. ¶ Our attitude about technology is that it's a canvas to paint pictures on. Some people in what I call the "Cyber Novelty Zone," especially around the Bay Area, go to all these digital fairs and shows go, "Oh, here's this new gadget, this new VR machine, this new Internet thing." To me those are all great tools to use, but once they've become as ubiquitous as telephones, what's the real intrigue? You've got to go back to things like content and material and the ideas that are coming across to you, regardless of the technological method by which they are being portrayed. I'd say that our personal attitude towards technology at Asphodel is that technologies are supportive things that make it all possible. That's why the emphasis isn't at all on technology but on the artists and the musical languages that they're developing.

Yeah, but the thought that you put into employing technology and putting on the kinds of non-traditional live events that you've been talking about takes on a whole new meaning when we recall that you're also running a record company. How does this all contribute to your idea of a label?

The direction that Asphodel is taking is the dilemma of the 20th century record label, where the record producer, the booker and the concert promoter are all elements of label business. Because of our diverse backgrounds in these areas, we want to find fresh ways to deal in order to create an environment that's more supportive of participating artists. We're really trying to work on that and expand into that avenue more than we want to go out waving a flag that says, "Hi, we're a label, and this is the roster." We'd rather go, "Hi, we're the artists and we work with various labels," so we're not stuck in the perpetual trap of label allegiances, loyalty and competition. As an ardent fan of independent labels, we really need to come up with our own distinct vision of what this is all about.

But if you look at the bills of the Recombinant shows, they were mostly Asphodel artists—I'm sure I'm missing something here so please help me out.

The artists who played those shows weren't Asphodel artists at first. But because of that experience, I think they became intrigued with the idea of trying something with us. That surprised me. I was just into seeing shows and appreciating what people were doing. I had no idea back then that the turntablist culture would break so wide open.

You were definitely at the right place at the right time. But Asphodel has always had a penchant for stuff that isn't easily categorized. It's been really incredible to see how broad Asphodel has become as of late, especially with the last Mixmaster Mike record. But that's something's that been building up for a while and to a certain extent attests to the kind of cultural relevance Asphodel has developed, particularly in the so-called "Age of Electronica." But that makes sense, because the kind of aesthetic the label has developed has quietly become one of the most influential of the late '90s in much the same manner that labels like SST, Sub Pop and Knitting Factory influenced popular culture during the first half of the decade. Yet there's no one particular sound you can pin on the label's artists that people associate with them.

Because Asphodel has been more eclectic than most labels, it's been equally influential, but in totally different ways because we're not focusing on one exclusive kind of music or community and pumping it into one label. We started things off with the Incredibly Strange Music reissues for Re/Search, which launched the whole "Mondo Exotica" cocktail thing. Then, after that I met some of the Illbient folks in New York, I was really intrigued with where they were coming from. So we thought about representing some of that territory as well. It all grew from there. The turntablism phenomenon was a natural outgrowth, which was then followed by more off-the-wall kind of material like the electronic soundscape records we put out such as the Drones series, including the latest one, The Frankenstein Symphony.

I listened to a little bit of that on your website, but the sound samples were too short for me to get a sense of what was going on. How does it relate to the Drones albums?

The Frankenstein Symphony is a sequel to the Drones series. The Drones albums were a six disc set in three volumes of continuous music without beats, that evolves in a continuous fashion. The Frankenstein Symphony is much more animated. It's characterized by a kind of sonic stitchery, which is weaved together using fragments of what other artists have composed for other pieces. So where with the Drones CDs you had all these elongated stretches of sound, these records are much more abrupt and cut up. It's more music "interruptus." That's the nature of the stitchery. We're going for much more activity and motion in the sound. That's the difference in styles between the two series. I'm going to be working on one of the volumes, called The Frankenstein Symphony Orchestra, which will be a real time manipulation of material using sources from all kinds of places using the Sound Traffic Control system as this giant musical instrument for a team of people to play.

So you'll be putting your philosophy of Remixology into practice by using your studio as the instrument to create the album.

Yeah. The idea is to use our studio as a sonic treatment plant. We want to process sound in the Dub fashion, as originated by Dub masters like the Mad Professor, Scientist and Lee Perry, where we take sounds and transform them by changing their shapes or using them to define each other. It's a system defined with DJ culture in mind, but it's defined a number of "D" Jockeys: Disc Jockey, which is an analogue form of manipulating vinyl sounds in real time, either by a turntablist or

the abstractors like Otomo Yoshihide, who scratch, needle drop, or beat juggle; then you have your Digital Jockeys who use computerized means to manipulate information, like sample manipulators or folks who work with hard drives or CDs as their instruments; we'll also have what we call Dub Jockeys, who take sounds from digital or analogue sources and dub them out, using the system's processing power to change their sounds through effects; and finally, we have the Diffusion jockey who projects their sounds by moving them around the room, from one point to another, as though they were objects-they're dealing with the architecture of sound in space by using the room as their mixing tool, bouncing between speakers rather than by crossfading between sound sources.

You're talking about taking the audio aspect of DJ culture to its next level, in much the same way that Asphodel's Illbient artists did with their first records. Which leads me to feel as though your aesthetic vision has been noticeably discernible on many of your releases. I don't mean to suggest that you're responsible for them as much as you've lent a guiding hand in their creation as a producer. In my opinion, there are obvious threads that connect such seemingly disparate records as Mike's Anti-Theft Device and Rob Swift's The Ablist with We's As Is and DJ Spooky's Songs of a Dead Dreamer.

The point is to give artists the ability to create their work without putting my handprint all over it.

That's exactly the sense I get from listening to them. You've provided their work with a support mechanism as opposed to an imposing one.

Anti-Theft Device is a great example.

And it's all about Mike. If there's a way through our channels to take what he's doing into other areas where he's the pilot of his own ship and we're there to help facilitate itbut under his own magnetism and plot formation-that's what it's all about. I was the producer of that record, but the style of production helped him open the door to discover different artistic elements that he wanted to explore. I just helped encourage him to try different things. Mike has a definite interest in being an artist above and beyond being just a turntable guy who does all of these crazy tricks, which he had done to a very powerful extent doing DJ battles with the Skratch Piklz. Now he feels that the challenge is to really make music and get into the whole

musical world, but do it in a way that doesn't compromise his artistic integrity.

During the late '80s, groups like Public Enemy's compositional techniques—how they used turntables and samplers—led a lot of critics to start saying that hip-hop was the future of the avante-garde. Much of the hip-hop you've put out, from the Piklz to The X-ecutioners has done a lot to affirm the legitimacy of those expectations, particularly in terms of how hip-hop has become a part of high culture. What are your thoughts on that?

When I see stuff like what Mike, Q-Bert and Craze are into these days, I view it as a progression from the more adventurous, sonic explorers in hip-hop. To me, even if they weren't hip-hop artists, I'd still be into what they were doing. What's interesting is how artists like The X-ecutioners and the artists we're working with have transcended those old "East Coast versus West Coast" distinctions that we associated with the gangsta mentality. Everyone is more accepting of each other. There's real respect for people who employ different styles. Everyone is trying to push the envelope and create innovative approaches. Even with the DJ battles, it's a friendly, challenging kind of confrontation that's taking place.

I think your appreciation of that fraternal ethos also informs the way you position different kinds of artists on your label. That brings us back to the leveling of class and cultural distinctions we talked about at the beginning of this interview. Not only is this elimination of distinctions symbolically taking place in a live setting, but you're also making that happen by allowing European high art composers like lannis Xenakis share label space with African-American and Filipino DJs from San Francisco and New York.

To me, the turntable thing during the early '90s was just an expression of great music. I wasn't thinking about its alliance with hip-hop so much, because turntables can spring from house, techno, drum and bass. It's because of the sonic foundation that Asphodel has that we make these kinds of connections—it's where our gravitational pull is. This whole ingredient in hip-hop, with the beat and the movement of the sound, is so contrary to what Xenakis did, because his work is more mathematically constructed. But despite such differences, there is this strange connectivity between them. Asphodel has been there to point some of these parallels out.

©



The emphasis isn't at all on technology but on the artists and the musical languages that they're developing.



o doubt you know of Neurosis. They've been turning out some of the heaviest, most intelligent music around for the last 13 plus years, with no end in sight. Releasing music through Neurosis and through a more open ended project called Tribes of Neurot, the core group of people continue to test limits, knock down walls, and assault the senses with music, visuals, and a raw energy that has to be seen to be truly appreciated. Scot, lead vocals and guitarist, was nice enough to talk with me about whatever came up one Sunday afternoon.

Interview by Josh Hooten

Do you ever turn Neurosis off? Do you delineate between your life in Neurosis and your life outside of it?

It's pretty much all encompassing. There's really no time off or anything. There's something everyday with me that has to do with the band. Depending on how things go, I will take a few days here or there and try to turn things off and just be with my kids, but even then I'm really just kidding myself—it's still there. I may not contact anybody about it, but in my mind it's always going.

I'm curious how you see Neurosis in the midst of the modern world—what place you see yourself occupying?

We're sort of an enlightened cancer. One of the first real, pure feelings I got when I was growing up and finding myself through music and so forth was that it is better to be here and to be a cancer to these people who want to control you. That's always been a part of how I feel as an individual. But then we like to play both sides of it. We like to use a lot of modern technology. We'll use whatever technology we can get our hands on, whether it's musical or whatever. In the music world, we're the darkhorse like fuck. We're totally on the outside, but we're more on the inside than most bands will ever know. We've played every club in this country over the last 10 years. We've done a bunch of our own tours as well as a few out there with the rest of the world. We had a really good time playing the Ozfest last year with 13 other bands.

That seems like it would have been a really different experience.

That's for sure. It was totally different for us. Was it fun just as a spectacle, or was it spiritually enriching too?

Well it was definitely enriching to see Black Sabbath like that. That was something we never would have thought would happen. That was something you'd have never heard

us talking about back in 1985, "Yeah, maybe we can get a tour with the original lineup of Black Sabbath." [laughs] That's a band that has been totally influential to us all the way back to the beginning. Black Sabbath is one of the few bands that we held up as icons to ourselves. ¶ The thing that I liked about Ozfest was that it was 14 different bands with a bunch of different attitudes coming from all over the world and everybody got along great. There was no bullshit. I completely enjoyed myself. I thought it was a great time and I made some really good friends with a lot of people in those bands. It was a special experience for us. Like after all these years in all these smoky little clubs and bowling alleys, but then all of a sudden we're in the sun and we've got all this air to breathe! ¶ We got to play to all of these completely unsuspecting people and in a bunch of places we had a bunch of people show up just to see Sabbath and us. That happened a few times-that's like the ultimate fucking compliment. It was good for us to do that because we needed to do something different—to force ourselves to exist in that type of situation. And when you've been doing what we've been doing for this long, anything you can do that's new is a good thing. ¶ When we toured with Pantera, that was great. When that happened, it was a



totally new experience for us. Everything like that that happens is good for keeping everybody expanding as humans and growing as people. It doesn't really matter about all this other petty political shit that people put on it. It's just a gig, you know? You've gotta put yourself where you're wanted—or needed.

And since your modus operandi has always been expanding and trying new things anyway, it's not like it's a contradiction to your general direction. Plus, Pantera's second record is a really good record!

Yes it is.

One thing I read on your website was that you hadn't played much in the sun before doing Ozfest.

We had played in the sun before, but we hadn't done it in years. It was really different, but at times it was great. There were a couple of times when we were playing looking at some natural formation that was really inspiring. And you know, I can't say enough about being able to breathe air when you're playing. The pictures of us at the end of that tour look pretty funny. We look like a bunch of leather bags. We're all brown and covered in green tattoos, looking like shit. [laughs]

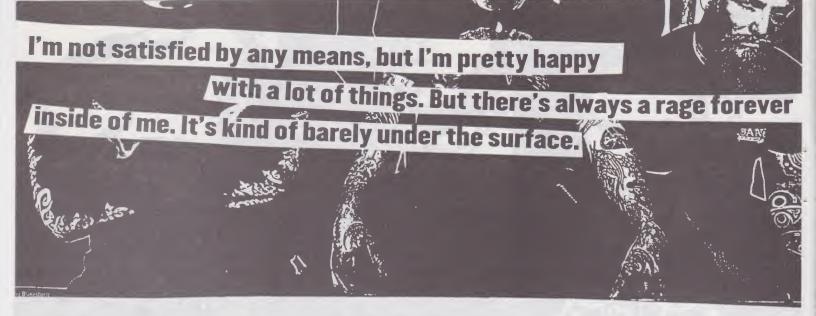
I think I would have been most concerned about my tattoos.

Absolutely. We totally fucked our tats up. The sun was brutal on them. And it was hot too. We were the only band who didn't have a tour bus—we didn't even have AC in our van! We just slept outside and shit, up every morning at 6:30. We were quite the sight. I imagine if you asked the other bands about us, they'd have some funny shit to say.

With being on small tours for so many years and then doing bigger tours like that, how do you handle marrying the artistic side of being a working band with the practical, pragmatic side of touring and merchandise and so forth? They seem like such completely different worlds to me.

That was something that took a long time to really mesh with us, but it finally did. The music just does its own thing. We put ourselves together for hours and hours and hours and eventually it just happens through trial and error, through this process that we have. As far as the other side goes, the business end and all that, we realized a long time ago that if you want to survive, you have to stick up for yourself; you have to use contracts and all that shit. Obviously we're well past that at this point,

but there was definitely a point-our first two tours-when we didn't use contracts or anything, it was all just verbal, "Yeah, sure we'll do that," over the phone. And 70 percent of the time that worked, but when you've got responsibilities, you can't afford to fuck around. We got hip to that pretty early on. ¶ We've also never been afraid to charge people for the amount of work that we put into this. We put in massive hours and effort into what we do long before we show up at a gig, where we give it everything we've got every fucking time that we play. We've somehow found a happy medium. We deal with things in a very straightforward manner business wise-we never fuck around, we've never had any outside people involved in our affiars at all, we do what we want to do. We call our shots. We work with other people, but we're very selective about that. At first it was hard to get a grasp on because if you sit down and think about it and ask yourself, "OK, am I a business man?" Well, yeah, on a certain level I am, and I have to be. If we're going to tour and put out albums and exist in a money world, you'd better get it right and know what you're doing or you're just going to get jacked by some other fool.



The commerce is going to happen regardless of whether or not you're on top of it, so you might as well be on top of it.

Business is pretty punk if you think about it. If you're learning how to sustain yourself doing what you want to do, what's more punk that than? It dawned on me a few years ago that this is what I'd been moving towards for a while—just get smart about shit and not letting yourself get screwed.

The money is going to change hands, and a lot of times whose hands the money goes into depends on how together you are.

That's right. And as long as you're not ripping anybody off or doing some bullshit plastic thing, there's no problem.

Is there a specific goal or destination with Neurosis or is it strictly a journey you're all on? Can you see yourself getting to a point where the things you're doing find a resolution, therefore making the band not necessary anymore, or do you think it's just a path you're on that doesn't have a finite end to it?

I really don't know. I wonder about that myself. I think it'll just go until it stops. It's always grown in every way. We usually sit down at the end of each cycle of album and tour and stuff and reassess how we feel and what we want to do and we see if it happens, and it always does. That's about us much as I can say about it. I definitely don't like to try and call what it will be—I think it's better to just let it find its course.

I think making strict plans can result in closing a lot of doors and missing a lot of opportunities.

Absolutely.

During the process of reevaluating after the cycle of an album and tour, do you ever sit down and think "That was the last time. The impetus to do it again isn't coming back." For me personally, a lot of times after something big I'm working on comes to an end, I get panicky thinking the creative spark isn't going to hit me again.

Do you want to know what the key is? Never let it stop. Never in your mind let it stop. If you see things as a project to project cycle, you will have natural drop offs. That was totally a problem for us. I had a full year where I couldn't do shit. You change your lifestyle and then all of a sudden you dry up all of your inspiration. I think you've just gotta keep it a constant thing. Always play everyday. That's one thing for sure-just play everyday even if it's just for a second. Just hit the guitar, or whatever instrument you play. In that way, you'll have moments when you're riffing out lots of stuff, and you'll have moments where you're just slowly picking away at something for a few months, but I think if you constantly dedicate yourself to it, it can continue. So far, that's where I'm at. Maybe someday I'll be like, "Fuck, I can't write another riff," but I don't think so. The other thing I think is important is to always be exploring music in other ways. The things that you surround yourself with have a lot to do with it. I think it definitely has a lot to do with what hits your ears.

For me it sometimes has a lot to do with who I surround myself with too. If I'm around a bunch of stifling people, I get stifled sometimes too.

But if you're around really creative people—people who are making shit, even if what their making sucks—the fact that they're getting shit done is very inspirational sometimes.

I totally agree. Whether it's the guy across the street reinstalling his sprinkler system in his front yard by himself, I'm like "damn, that's badass!" With all the different things that we do and put out there, we still have time to sit around and not do anything. It's not like there's a lack of shit to do if you want to be creative—there's tons of shit to do. The more that you do the more work you make for yourself.

Work begets work.

And work is good.

Are you happy?

Yeah. I'm not satisfied by any means, but I'm pretty happy with a lot of things. But there's always a rage forever inside of me. It's kind of barely under the surface. The fire fuels my life and inspires me to try and learn to be a better person and not to make the same mistakes I've made in my life. I would say yeah I'm happy, because my kids are happy. When they're happy, I'm happy. But on lots of levels I'm not. There are lots of things I feel I'm not good at in my life and I've got a long way to go. But I'm happy with my kids, and I'm happy with my friends, I've got good brothers in the band. I've got plenty to be thankful for.

Output

Description:

QUESTIONS WITH THE ZINE VIPER PRESS PRESENTS

1. How long have you been doing your zine and what issue are you on?

It took me more than a year to finish the (just completed) first issue. In 1998, I think I spent 40 quiet Saturday nights alone in my apartment working on it. I'm still recuperating.

2. How long do you plan on doing it?

Jeez, I don't know. Until monkeys take over the world.

3. What would cause you to quit?

Getting run over by a truck. Getting molten lead poured into my eyes. Getting my heart ripped out of my ribcage by giant vultures. Getting bored.

4. How do you distribute your zine?

Besides the normal channels—local stores, national distros, mail order, etc.—I give them to cute girls I see on the street, in clubs, on the train, etc. I imagine they take one look at the contents and toss it in the garbage. Ah well.

5. Why is your zine called what it's called?

Originally it was called *Sniper Press*, but whenever I tried to interview someone they'd say, "*Sniper Press*? Is that some kind of militia-terrorist publication?" and get spooked. The zine's name, *Viper Press Presents*, is something like *Alfred Hitchcock Presents*, in that each issue has a different sub-title. The sub-title of the first issue, "Blue Fire Hereafter," refers to something I heard while working on it with the TV on at 5 am. A televangelist was yammering on about hell and sinners and whatnot, and said people like me can expect "to burn in the blue fire hereafter," whatever that is.

6. In order of importance, what would you rank as the three main subjects you cover?

a) Punk, art, science, history. b) Food, sex, death, language, deviance. c) Everything else that makes life worth living.

7. What's the hardest part about doing your zine?

Resisting the urge to compromise the quality of the design or the honesty and clarity of the writing with half-assed, uninspired work out of laziness. That and getting issues lost in the mail. I'm sure there's a pile of my zines at the bottom of the sea somewhere, thanks to the US Postal Service.

8. What is the most rewarding part?

I sent copies of *Viper Press Presents* to my grandmothers and despite all of the cussing, agitated graphics and twisted subject matter, they enjoyed it. That's rad.

9. Are you doing your zine for free records?

I don't review records so nobody sends me any.

10. Was it weird to interview Sally Struthers?

Given that I've never interviewed Sally Struthers, I suppose the cor-

rect response is yes. But it's not as weird as Jason from Hot Water Music's redneck haircut. Chop that mullet, son.

11. What's the best and worst interview you've ever done?

Best: Steve Albini. Worst: a couple of arrogant jackoffs who ran this water-treatment research center that I wrote about for the news wire services in 1994. I can't even remember what the article was about, but I do remember they made my life hell for a week, the fucks.

12. Quote your favorite thing ever said in the pages of your zine.

"Absorb what is useful. Discard what is useless. Add what is essentially your own." —Bruce Lee

13. Do you write everything yourself? If so, why?

I wrote about 75 percent of the material in this issue because, I guess, I've fooled myself into thinking I have something important to say.

14. How is your zine produced?

On a big ol' web press (using soybean inks and partially recycled paper) in Saline, Michigan, for top-grade book binding.

15. Handwritten vs. Typewriter vs. Computer?

I use a computer and a variety of graphics programs pretty extensively, but I'm currently trying to add a greater degree of organic design and humanity to my work. I can understand how people are turned off by a highly mechanized, cold presentation in a zine. So I'm doing a lot more stuff by hand.

16. What other zines inspire you?

Cometbus, Craphound, Motorbooty, Vague, Acme Novelty Library, Murder Can Be Fun —too many to list, really. A lesser-known source of personal inspiration is the "book constructions" of Italian Futurists of the 1920s and '30s. Their work was a half-century ahead of its time, both in presentation and attitude. We're talking zines with metal bindings, brilliant politically infused art, and incredibly adventurous, vibrant typographic experimentation, much of it hand-drawn.

17. What is "selling out"?

Sacrificing integrity for vanity.

18. If you could live off your zine, would you?

With my lucrative gig as Madonna's paid love slave, why should I?

19. If you had a chance to interview someone who you would most likely never have a chance to talk to, who would it be?

Nelson Mandela, Jodie Foster, John Lee Hooker, Vaughn Oliver, Woody Allen, Matt Groening, Vaclav Havel.

20. Describe your dream interview (who, where, what setting).

Mira Sorvino. Naked. On my futon.

Viper Press Presents P.O. Box 3394 Chicago IL 60690-3394

feels more like a lhottomiess pit.



Rising phoenix-like from the ashes of the late, great Chicago-based art-jazz-dub-punk quartet Trenchmouth, The Eternals continue to exist well outside any genre, showing substance, subtle style and longevity that most independent music fans have not seen in far too long.

Interview with Damon & Wayne by Jessica Hopper

What was the impetus to start the Eternals? Was there anything you were trying to explore or go after that you didn't get to do in Trenchmouth? The Eternals are considerably more dub oriented than T-mouth, was that a conscious decision, or just where you're at musically and taste-wise?

Damon: Well, when Trenchmouth ended, Wayne and I still had a lot of ideas left to explore. The ideas were intangible—they revolved around melody and space. Whilst securing the current line up of the Eternals, we were lucky enough to play with several talented musicians that helped us focus on a direction to work towards. None were more helpful than Dan Flegiel who plays drums, percussion and sometimes guitar and is the final part of the three piece puzzle that is The Eternals. ¶ I do not agree that we are consid-

Wayne: We have a great musical commonness. It has always been very natural playing together, from way back in the day. We've both changed a lot musically, but end up turning each other on to new sounds and new ideas. We're musical partners—sidekick guys. We've known each other for over ten years. We moved here to essentially start a band together.

Damon: Even though there is a musical sameness, we're different in some ways that end up complimenting each other well. We also have Dan, who comes from a totally different area—he's got a totally different take on some of what we do. He's a great musician and will come up with things that we would never even conceptualize. I mean, he comes from punk rock, but he's from Madison and we're from the East Coast, so you get a certain amount of regionalism.

You've lived in Chicago and made music here for around a decade. What are the major differences—scene- or attitude-wise—than when you started?

Damon: Chicago has changed a lot in the II years I have been here. It seems to have

grown and metamorphized into a new animal. I enjoy the Chicago music scene much more now than I did when I first got here—the community is closer and yet more

diverse. The Chicago scene has never had a cohesive sound. Even back in the day, before I was here, it sported a unique diversity. Its possibilities are the reasons I have stayed.

Being involved with independent music/punk rock for so long, what keeps it fresh—what keeps you motivated?

Damon: Music is an endless well—although sometimes it feels more like a bottomless pit. Music for the sake of music is why I have been involved for so long. The scene has definitely changed—I'm not that interested in scenes unless they are in movies. It's People I care about; music I care about. Changes in the scene are irrelevant. The music that got me started still keeps me going. The new music that I find now keeps me going. I'm always looking for more ideas.

Coming from DC and having roots in a time where punk rock was definitely more politically aware and oriented, do you still carry that torch?

How to do you feel about the state of the connection—or lack thereof—between political action/thought and punk rock?

Damon: That's a tough question. Ideas are political. Coming up with new ideas is political. Activism is a good thing. Sometimes it can be consumed like everything else, like television, like food. Sometimes it makes a difference; sometimes it just makes the day go by faster and you feel better about yourself. Changing minds through words and music is activism. Miles Davis was a musical activist. He made a difference. But can you touch the difference? Can you tell the difference? You can answer that question again, just insert Jello Biafra's name or Joe Strummer's.

Thrill Jockey is an incredibly diverse label that seems unencumbered by any sort of genre niche—seemingly a perfect place for the Eternals—how did you come to hook up with them?

Damon: Bettina seems to like our music and wants to support it. I feel very lucky to be on this label because it is a hard working label that supports the musical community in which I work.

Where do you see The Eternals heading? What would you like, ultimately, to achieve with the band?

Damon: I'd like The Eternals sound to always be evolving, changing and growing. There are so many ideas I'd like to explore; so many things each one of us can bring to the table. I want to keep it free, with not too much structure of the "OK, you are the guitar player, I am the drummer" variety.

Wayne: I almost feel limitless with this band. I feel like all of our songs sound so different, but they all sound like "The Eternals" to me. Regardless of who is playing melodica, who is playing keybords, who is playing bass...

Damon: The only way I feel limited with this band is maybe by technology. Every time I turn the corner with a new musical idea, I have to go buy something to help me accomplish that sound, or that idea—samplers, tape decks, what have you.

Wayne: There is so much I still want to learn, so in that way, I do feel a little limited too. I want to fiddle with a lot of different instruments.

But mostly, I want to be number one. [laughs]
"Eternals: Number one band in the Nation."

Damon: Number one across every genre—R&B, country, everything. Eternals: Number one.

he Eternals

erably more "dub" than Trenchmouth. I think that the word "dub" is a hard word to use correctly. It is similar to the word "punk" in its various misinterpretations. I think that the sonic palate of The Eternals is wider than that of Trenchmouth but hey, it's a different band. Time, context as well as players change music and sound. The ideas that myself, Wayne and Dan are working on probably wouldn't even have occurred to us when we were in Trenchmouth because it wasn't 1999 and Dan wasn't playing with us. Dan is quite a joy to work with. He often brings unexpected ideas to the table and that is probably the most refreshing part of making music.

Why did Trenchmouth end?

Damon: It was just time to end. We did it for seven or eight years. It was time to go, time to pack it up. There comes a time where you just want to do a new thing.

Why did you two keep working together?

THEY COME HOME AND FOUND HIM DEAD IN THE YARD, FACE DOWN IN A MUD PUDDLE, NAKED, WITH A CORN COB UP HIS ASS.



top a blood red carpet at the end of a long, narrow hallway in a foggy neighborhood of San Francisco sits John Marr's library, a private monument to American crime and disaster. As writer and editor of the zine Murder Can Be Fun, Marr has archived thousands of books and periodicals that document gruesome misdoings and mishaps. Titles like The Gentle Dynamiter, Brothers In Blood and Old Time Punishments chock his shelves. Magazines like Inside Detective and True Police feature juicy articles such as "His Cruel Sex Gadgets Made Me a Murderess" and "Stomped to Death by Children."

A mild-mannered professional by day, John Marr spends his off-hours creating Murder Can Be Fun. Since 1986, Murder Can Be Fun has been informing readers of underreported events in American history, like the Boston molasses flood of 1919, and the Port Chicago explosion of 1942. His exhaustive report of that explosion, which killed 320 people, and the ensuing persecution of the black survivors, far outdistances the passing mention that event receives in high school history classes. The retelling of the murder of Eunice Bolles, age six, at the hands of Hannah Ocuish, age 12, in 1786, succinctly contradicts the glossily nostalgic view of the virtuous past espoused by the "Family Values" Right. By crosssectioning American history at the disaster point, Marr presents a rear-window view of otherwise untold tales of treachery, racism, and the kinds of atrocities that today are blamed on TV violence.

Interview by Megan Shaw

I think everyone has some degree of interest in true crime and disaster. How did you come to be interested enough to do a zine?

I've always had a real morbid sensibility, even before I learned how to read! As a kid, one of my favorite picture books was Slovenly Peter, especially the part where the kid gets his thumbs cut off. I've also always loved old stuff-old books in particular. Even as a kid, I watched very little TV. I'd rather curl up with a book. Like most 8-year-old boys, I was into the Hardy Boys, but unlike most, I preferred the original books from the '20s and '30s. A bunch of killjoys rewrote the books in the '50s, cutting out the parts where people get killed and stripping Frank and Joe of their guns. Disaster books were another favorite. For some reason there have always been plenty of good books for kids on both natural and man-made disasters. I had them all. ¶ I didn't get into crime until I was in college, partly because until the '80s there

wasn't really much in the way of writing on crime. Crime books were fairly few and far between. In college, I picked up Carl Sifakis' Encyclopedia of American Crime. It had all these great cases in it, and that got me started buying crime books. ¶ Then, in the late '70s and early '80s I was doing the punk rock thing. Punk had a fascination with death and disaster too. That was part of the reason I was drawn to it.

Where do you see that?

One of my favorite singles from around 1979 is a song called "Gacy's Place" by an obscure band called The Mentally Ill. It's a minor punk rock classic, and the refrain goes "they're fucking your kids." As I got more and more interested in crime and disaster, I would talk to people at gigs and they would be interested too, but no one really knew anything about it. I was getting stuff at used book stores and various other arcane sources, so I had access to a lot of unusual information that matched the punk rock aesthetic, but was basically unknown. I really loved early Re/Search books and Search and Destroy zine, and I decided I would do my own little magazine. I figured there was an audience, that people would like reading about it, and they did. So it gradually grew. I photocopied a hundred copies of the first issue, but recent issues are off-set printed and I print thousands of copies. It's been a very slow progression.

How else did you think of your zine in terms of

When punk first started in the '70s, it was more literate and artistically oriented than it is now, and there was a stronger strain of black humor. People knew about Dadaism and Situationist aesthetics; they read William Burroughs and maybe J.G. Ballard and loved John Waters films. Everyone was fascinated by the latest atrocities like the People's Temple tragedy. People thought it was cool that one major punk venue, 1839 Geary, was right next to the former site of the Peoples Temple. The Jim Jones sign was still up when the first gigs happened there. ¶ I like to think of MCBF as being a punk rock zine that has nothing to do with music. When I started publishing, most punk rock zines were totally generic: stupid record reviews, lame band interviews, and dumb scene reports. When 7 Seconds went on tour, you'd see a Kevin Seconds interview in every

zine for the next year. I wanted to make MCBF the kind of zine that punks would want to read even though there is nothing in there about the Ramones.

You really think that punk is less literate now than it used to be?

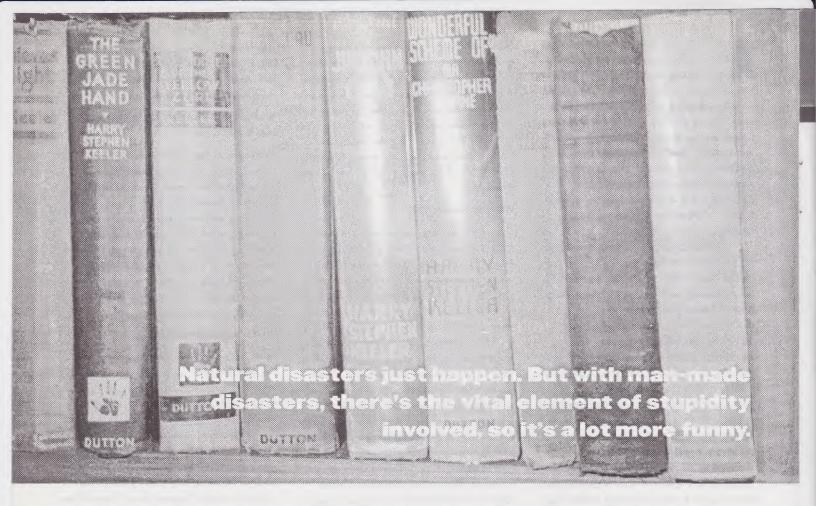
I think so. At least in this country, punk started among the art student and young urban bohemian crowd. Over the years, it's been transformed into more of a suburban, rebellious adolescent phenomena-very youth-oriented. This is not a demographic noted for its literacy. The only punks that read any more are the left-wing-activist breed. I'll hand it to them, reading Chomsky is quite literate but I just think reading Burroughs is more fun.

Wasn't that present in the '70s?

Punk has never been a bastion for young Republicans, but the political thing didn't really gel until the early eighties, with Crass and all their mostly horrible imitators. I don't care how great you think their brand of politics were, most of their music really sucked. I remember one very prominent punk with impeccable Marxist credentials who preferred to bop around the house singing along to Skrewdriver's "Shove That Dove Up Your Ass." In the '70s and early '80s, having shows in an over-21 venue was just a minor hassle. Even finding 18-andover places wasn't a big deal because hardly any minors were into punk. The audience was much older than it is now. When the LA hardcore scene happened, with bands like Black Flag, that's when suburban adolescents got into it big-time. A lot of really great music came out, but there was definitely a different aesthetic working. There still were literate bands like the Wipers, but a lot of the black humor and artistic sophistication got lost.

Your articles tend to deal with California crime and disaster in particular, and American crime and disaster in general.

That's because it's easier to get access to those research materials. The basic resource for my material is old newspapers. Take my story about the glass factory disaster from Murder Can Be Fun #18. In 1900, 22 people watching a football game from on top of a glass factory were killed when the roof collapsed and they fell onto the ovens. Down at the San Francisco Public Library, they have micro-



films of all five or six San Francisco newspapers that were published in 1900, so in a couple of afternoons you wind up with a huge stack of clippings. But for something that happened in North Dakota, I don't think there's a library around here that has back issues of newspapers from North Dakota. So the research leans toward California. And also, with local stuff it is really easy to visit the scene of the crime!

Do you travel to visit sites of disaster and crime?

I generally don't plan my itinerary to coincide with scenes of major disasters, but wherever I go, I make a point to take in the local points of interest. When I was in Lincoln, Nebraska, I spent a fruitless afternoon trying to locate the grave of Charles Starkweather—it would have made a great photo for my album! My first time in Hollywood, I made sure to hit the little graveyard where Carl "Alfalfa" Switzer, Virginia Rappe, and Rudolph Valentino are buried. I took a picture of myself in front of Kurt Cobain's house in Seattle, but unfortunately I didn't take a picture of two sad 14-year-old grunge girls who were moping around the little

park-that would have been perfect! We also visited the graves of Bruce and Brandon Lee; Bruce's headstone had been vandalized and someone had scratched "We got wasted here" on the plaque! I have a picture of the plaque marking the site of the Triangle Shirtwaist factory fire. I took a lot of pictures when I drove across the Tacoma Narrows Bridge. I went out of my way specifically to do that. ¶ When I was working on the "Zoo Deaths" issue, I took that opportunity to go down to Portland and take some pictures of the zoo where a lion had eaten some kid who dangled himself into its pen. The lion had then been found shot the next day. I went digging around in the Portland newspapers that you can't get down here and I was able to find out that the kid's friends who had been with him that night had killed the lion. The papers down here and The New York Times hadn't covered that. I also cruised around town and took pictures of the houses where all the stupid teenagers lived.

How did you know where they lived?

In the good old days, newspapers published the addresses of everybody. It depended on the policy of the paper, but I think up until the '50s or '60s it was almost universal. I think the reason might have been that if your name's John Smith, and they write a story about John Smith, they want to make sure that they're writing about the appropriate particular John Smith, and not another one. Although I understand why they've stopped doing this—not the least reason being to frustrate ghouls such as myself—I really miss it. I remember sitting in a cafe on Polk Street, reading clippings about some idiot who had had a run in with a polar bear at the zoo in the '50s, and discovering he had lived only a few blocks away!

I see the *Journal of Forensic Science* here on your coffee table. Do you subscribe to it?

I subscribed for a couple of years, but finally let it lapse—the price was astronomical! It's an interesting magazine. In every issue there are one or two really fascinating articles. Let's look in this issue. There's a paper on injuries due to letter bombs, and two others titled "Pyromania: What Does It Mean?", and "The Violent Behaviors Associated with the Anti-Christ Delusion." The case reports







Y

ZOO DEATHS

are always good. Here's a false report of product tampering involving a rodent in a soft drink can, and a report on fatalities related to the use of difluoryl ethane—I think that's huffing a refrigerant.

My favorite article of yours was about the Tacoma Narrows steel suspension bridge that snapped.

I first heard about that was when it was written up in my differential equations book in college. I forget what the exact connection to differential equations was, but it was a really interesting piece, and it piqued my interest in bridge disasters.

Why is your zine more about man-made disasters than about natural disasters?

Natural disasters just happen. But with manmade disasters, there's the vital element of stupidity involved, so it's a lot more funny. Earthquakes aren't especially humorous, but when a bridge bounces apart because of stupid design; or when 400 people get killed in a nightclub fire because the thing was a tinderbox and the only exit was one revolving door; or when a storage tank bursts, inundating a city with millions of gallons of

molasses—those beat any hurricane story I've ever read! You can bet that when I finally get to Boston, I'll visit the site of the former Coconut Grove as well as the area where they had the Boston Molasses flood.

Are plane crashes too ordinary to be interesting to you?

Pretty much. I like the guys who blow up planes—I've always wanted to do an article on those. There's a couple really famous cases and a few not-so-famous ones. The best known case was John Graham in 1955. He had a problem with his mother, so he kissed her goodbye after slipping 25 sticks of dynamite in her suitcase. He made her sign a lot of travel insurance forms. He was so nervous he screwed up the travel insurance, which is how they caught him.

And the plane blew up?

Of course! He killed something like 40 or 50 people.

What a way to commit matricide!

Quite a creative one. I like tearing apart the image that we live now in the worst times, the

most violent times.

What are your favorite kinds of crimes?

I always love a good bar fire-bombing.

Bar fire-bombing?

Yeah, when someone fire-bombs a bar and kills like a hundred people. I also appreciate its close cousin: mass bar shootings.

How often does that happen?

Surprisingly often! Many people are sensitive about being bounced from a bar. It's an informal thing I've been casually researching for the last few years. Whenever I find an article about someone pulling a stunt like this, I make a note of it. I'd like to do an article on that one of these days. ¶ I've gotten completely bored with serial killers. Serial killers are so '80s. When you get right down to it most serial killers are just real dull, repressed losers. I like reading about losers-but most writers take this tack about what terrifying menaces they are. Unless you're a hooker, serial killers are about as scary as a kid with a cap gun. I could go out and kill a dozen hookers before I got caught.



You wave a \$20 bill at them and they'll get in your car and let you drive them to your favorite body drop. Ted Bundy, on the other hand—there was a killer with style and power. He was creepy. ¶ Another favorite crime is the ransom kidnappings of children. It's very mean stuff mostly practiced by incompetents with grandiose notions of themselves as Master Criminals. It's probably my bestconcentrated crime collection. I have most of the major books on that. I had a clipping on my refrigerator for many years about a guy who was having a nasty custody dispute with his wife. So one holiday he took the kids down to the steel mill where he worked and tossed them in the crucible, lit it up and roasted them to death. The kind of article I like to write is one in which I can track down every major instance of one kind of crime, like post office killings. When I started writing about postal killings, it was some-

Gacy's no Picasso either, but he was a really good killer—he did it first, and he did it with style. His paintings are so garish! And of course everyone hates clowns.

thing that was still manageable and freshnow it's become a cliche. "Death at Disneyland" was a perfect subject. I could find out about every single death at Disneyland and fit it all into one article. I was really happy with that. They're such tight-asses down in Anaheim, I think we will always be able to cherish Disney deaths. ¶ I'm also a big fan of auto-erotic asphyxiation-reading about it, that is. Have you read that book Auto-Erotic Asphyxiation? It's the basic text loaded with great case histories and serious analysis. The case I liked most is about a guy who was at his fiancee's house. Everyone wanted to go to the shopping mall but he begged off it for some reason. They come home and found him dead in the yard, face down in a mud puddle, naked, with a corn cob up his ass.

He was suffocating himself in the mud puddle?

Yeah. And the thing that really struck me was, why did he do it at his fiancee's family's house? I mean, some things you only do in the privacy of your own home! I suspect that the thrill of discovery only heightened the sensation. I guess the family wasn't too upset about that broken engagement. ¶ I went through a kick a while back about women poisoners. They're interesting because I like to think they are the cruelest killers. I'm interested in the ones who poison family members or people they're caring for, and they do it slowly. They keep these guys in agony for months. Sometimes these poor guys will end up in the hospital and the doctors will be pulling their hair out because no one suspects arsenic poisoning. Being poisoned is a pretty agonizing way to die. Even your heavy-duty sadistic serial killer seldom keeps things going for more than a few

MCBF has become a lot bigger with the passage of time

There's an inverse relationship there: Issues have gotten bigger, but frequency has dropped off. The first eight issues were more or less quarterly, but they were pretty skinny. Now, it has become less than annual.

What's the theme of the upcoming issue? Music.

What are the new articles about?

There's an article on Richard Manuel, the keyboardist for The Band who hung himself on the reunion tour-yet another reason they should never have gotten back together! I'm also working on an article about the little girl who got crushed to death at a David Cassidy concert in London. I'm going to England next month with my girlfriend, so that's a perfect opportunity to go to the libraries in London and get the tabloid coverage of the event. You can't get that kind of stuff over here, and I'm sure the lurid details are worth the effort of traveling and taking an afternoon at the library. ¶ There will also be an article on that western swing guy who stomped his wife to death in front of his daughter, Spade Cooley. And I'd like to do a little bit on the jazz saxophonist Warne Marsh who dropped dead on stage. And maybe a piece on Joe Meek, the British

record producer who went nuts and blew away his landlady and himself. And The Who stampede, of course—talk about young lives that could have been saved by punk rock!

Have you had any direct experiences with remarkable deaths or disasters?

When I was in junior high, we were studying in science class when we heard screaming and yelling from the classroom next door. It kept going and going, and a minute later this kid came running into our class and he was on fire from the waist up.

Wow!

I was very impressed with our teacher's presence of mind. He tore the kid's shirt off. It looked like he had had a really bad sunburn from the waist up. As we watched it, his skin was wisping away. It didn't look that bad or that gross, just kind of weird. And the smell was so atrocious they had to close the science building for the rest of the day. It's an illwind, as they say.

How did that happen?

There are two stories, and I've never been sure which one is true. There were five kids who got burned. They had been doing an experiment with an alcohol lamp, and there was a can of alcohol on the lab bench near them. They claimed that the fumes had somehow ignited and the can had blown up. But other people more wise in the ways of teenage boys and fire suspect that they were probably squirting alcohol on the lamp to make it burn faster. And, of course, it sucked the flame in and blew up on them. As a coda to the story, that kid survived, although he had to go through the agony of skin grafts. He was back in school the next year, but two years later he was killed in a car crash.

When I was in seventh grade, a kid in my class took PCP and stabbed his sister to death.

Wow! Well, it's always more interesting when it's someone you know.

Do you know any murder victims or murderers?

I've known a few of both.

Really? Who do you know that is a murderer?

An old friend of the family who I used to play with before I went to school. She grew up and developed schizophrenia and was fine when she was taking her medication. But when she got out on the streets, she stopped taking her medication and one day she flipped out and

shot up a shopping mall in Philadelphia. I don't remember if she actually killed anyone. If she did, it was only one or two people—but it wasn't for lack of effort or intent on her part. She just forgot to check her back and some guy tackled her almost immediately. ¶ Then, there was my best friend from kindergarten and first grade who smashed in an old lady's head when we were in high school. As for victims, at one of my summer jobs in an office when I was in high school, one of my co-workers was a victim of a murder-suicide.

By a spouse?

By a boyfriend. She was going out with this really sleazy guy, a typical mid-'70s asshole who drove a Trans Am or one of those big stupid cars, and he had this license plate that said "7 INCHS," or "8 INCHS." She had the good sense to dump him, but he didn't take kindly to it so he blew her away and killed himself. It was a pretty bleak morning around the office the next day. ¶ Those are my brushes with the dark side. However, I much prefer reading about these things. I don't have any great desire to be a pen pal to murderers. I was even a little bit hesitant about buying my Gacy painting.

You have one?

Yeah, it's in my library. It's just the Pogo the Clown one that everyone has. I went up to Seattle for the Death Row Art Show in 1989 or '90. I had been invited to come up, take a table, and sell some zines. I wanted to go to the Northwest anyway, because I'd never been there. Gacy's art dealer was there with a lot of Gacy paintings, and he was a really nice guy. I thought, "I really should get one of these," and I regret not buying more. His seven dwarves paintings were pretty twisted. There's no more where they came from.

Do you have any other serial killer art?

No. Most of it is terrible! Gacy's no Picasso either, but he was a really good killer—he did it first, and he did it with style. His paintings are so garish! And of course everyone hates clowns.

I was surprised to notice that about your book and art collection that you don't have an extensive collection of grisly photos.

If I stumble across it, I'll look at it, but I don't really go out of my way to look at war photos or anything. Dead bodies are dead bodies. I'm more interested in the stories about how bodies got that way.





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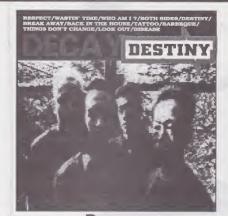


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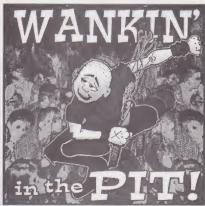
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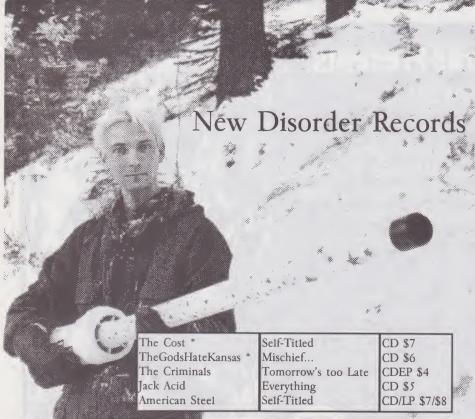
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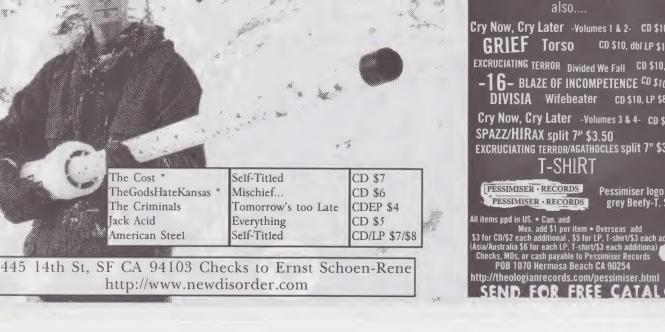


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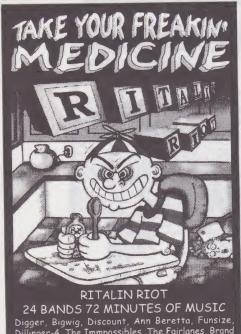
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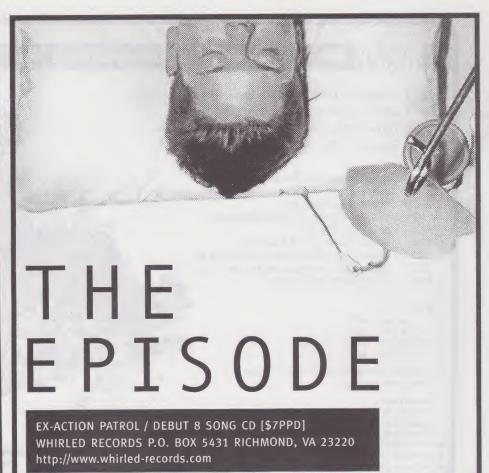




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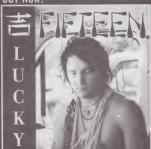
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PUNK PLANET 77

LIFDURINGWARTIME

n the following pages you will find the letters of Boris and Stasa, two young anarcho-punks caught at ground zero of the Kosovo Crisis, the Yugoslav capital of Belgrade. Through e-mails sent out to friends in America, written as NATO bombs dropped around them, Boris and Stasa allow us a harrowing glimpse into their lives. However, before that glimpse begins, it is important to understand how the bombs began falling in the first place.

Both America and its European allies have been entangled in the 10-year-old Yugoslavian civil war from the very beginning. At first, Western participation took the form of tacitly encouraging the rise of Balkan nationalist movements as an anti-Communist counterweight to the old Stalinist regime that was Yugoslavia. Later, it became actively involved in a military manner, by putting UN troops on the ground in Bosnia in an effort to end ethnic cleansing.

Germany's former Foreign Minister Volker Ruhe inaugurated Western involvement in the former Yugoslavia by pushing the European Union to recognize Croatia's right to national self-determination in 1990, officially demonstrating the West's desire to break up the fragile Yugoslav federation before it had the chance to split up by itself. Some political analysts contend that the West helped start the Yugoslav civil war by refusing to grant aid to the former federal government in Belgrade in the late 1980s, choosing to award it to provincial governments instead as though they were already their own sovereign nations.

Throughout the 1991-95 conflict in Bosnia-Herzegovina, there were large contingents of NATO troops operating under UN jurisdiction fighting Bosnia's Serbs and Croats in order to secure the safety of the outgunned Moslem population. When it became apparent that the United Nations could not safeguard the plight of Bosnia's Moslem minority properly, NATO finally took military action against the Serbs. In the summer of 1995, the US Airforce became an active combatant in the conflict by bombing Serbian forces, culminating in NATO's political administration and military occupation of the former Yugoslav republic.

Over 20,000 NATO troops remain in Bosnia-Herzegovina to this day. Alliance officials perform a variety of functions, from training military and police forces to determining the political makeup of the state's supposedly multiethnic government. In essence, Bosnia is the first European country to be run by NATO. While many concur that the alliance's efforts to stitch together a multiethnic democracy has been an outright failure, many people also believe that the establishment of a NATO protectorate in the Balkans effectively ended the fratricidal blood shed that took place for over four long and bitter years.

The current conflict between Serbia and NATO is in large part a replaying of the roles both combatants starred in during the Yugoslav civil war five years earlier. At least on paper, everything is following the same old pattern that was first played out during the war in Bosnia. Except that it's just not working out the way anyone planned.

As of this printing, NATO's air war been an absolute failure. Unable to destroy Yugoslavia's air defense network, prevented from being able to identify Serbian ground troops due to bad weather, frequently targeting civilian refugee convoys instead of Serbian armored columns—NATO forces seem to have resorted to bombing Yugoslavia back to the stone age. Instead of destroying army bases, NATO bombs power plants. Instead of targeting munitions facto-

ries, NATO attacks electrical appliance manufacturers. And when its target maps are supposedly incorrect, NATO mistakenly destroys foreign embassies of superpower states accused of stealing our nuclear secrets, like China.

The overall results are nothing short of catastrophic. Innocent civilians get killed in ever larger numbers and Serbian public opinion becomes increasingly reactionary and more supportive of Milosevic. Relations with countries such as China retreat all the way back to Cold War terms. But that's to be expected, because war always transforms its participants, no matter what nationality or political persuasion.

Which brings us back to Boris and Stasa, two young anarcho-punks in their early 20s living through the epicenter of the third European war of the 20th century, alive, engaged, and processing it all in a uniquely candid, personal and political manner. There's not a single thing they leave unaccounted for. Under the weight of NATO's bombing campaign, Boris and Stasa recount the experience of what it really means to be under fire. Not just in a literal sense, but in an ideological one too.

Not only are they political dissidents in their own country, Boris and Stasa are also fierce critics of Western capitalism as well. They hate NATO and Western liberalism as much as they despise the authoritarian Milosevic regime that governs them. Boris and Stasa look at both sides, seeing nothing of any redeeming moral value in either of them. If Milosevic wins, it'll just be a continuation of the same anti-democratic nationalist society that they've already been raised in. If NATO wins, all that will result will be another armed colony of the west, like the one they find in Bosnia—"Coca-Colonization," they call it.

As Boris and Stasa watch their lives getting turned upside down, they both reflect on how they are being transformed by the experience, rebelling against death's tendencies to twist them into that which they hate: nationalists, warmongers, religious fanatics, trauma victims consumed with hatred and an unstoppable desire for revenge. Nor do Boris and Stasa spare us from their own fear of becoming that either. They both make their readers keenly aware of the kinds of conflicts that the war creates inside themselves, qualifying their own feelings of helplessness and rage with a persistently articulated desire to not give in to the circumstances.

No matter how upset and disrupted their lives get, Boris and Stasa doggedly insist on the need to maintain their own opinions about the circumstances surrounding them while recognizing how little real power they have to prevent the war from continuing. It's remarkable how strong they are, and yet at the same time, candidly honest and forthcoming about their vulnerabilities. Every time something happens, they get online and write to their American anarchist friends about it. In every bomb blast, there's another thought about capitalism. In every Western news report about the war that they watch on cable TV, Boris and Stasa explain how foreign media dehumanizes the Serbs.

Perhaps that lesson is the crux of this entire set of letters. During a time when the drums of war are beating loudly in our own media, we are continuously subject to the kinds of demeaning caricatures of our so-called "enemies" that make it possible for us to legitimate killing them. Boris and Stasa's letters, so personal and so frightening, make it impossible to stand idly by.

Introduction by Joel Schalit

TETTERS ROM/THE WOSOVO CRISIS

Hey Kevin,

I'm gonna keep it short, since I'm so excited. Fuck, it's hectic. Tonight Stasa and I saw some flashing light. There were no alarms or sirens or anything, just flashes and explosions. The ground was trembling like a fucking earthquake. After a few of these detonations we saw Obrenovac in flames. I think that NATO bombed the power plant there. We were shaking.

Right now we're listening to the news. NATO attacked the following cities: Pancevo, Beograd, Danilovgrad, Podgorica, Krusevac, Kursumlija, Novi Sad, and Pristina. Apparently, NATO planes and rockets were launched from Italy and Croatia. Slovenia is reported to have supported NATO's decision. All this is from the sources of Studio B [Yugoslav State Television], so take this with grain of salt. Wait, there's fresh news: Pristina is without electricity. Apparently there are casualties too, but we don't know how many. It's merely speculation.

Take care Kevin, we love you. Keep in touch.

Stasa and Boris

. Hey Kevin,

It's kinda sad that the first time I sat down to write you I had to write about all the bad stuff that's happening. The hectic thing is that now it all looks like a game, but the stakes are high. Everything about this situation is so complex that it's gotten to the point of absurdity. Like Tracy Chapman said: "Why are all the missiles called Peacekeepers, when they are aimed to kill?"

Well, something like that is happening right now. Each side involved is just using us to get what they want. There's something bigger going on for sure, but it's absurd to try comprehending what they want to accomplish in the long run.

I was pretty scared the first time that we thought they were about to bomb us. I think that maybe it would've been better if they did it back then. Now it's more serious and I think that really heavy stuff is going to happen. For instance, yesterday the military police started gathering men. They like to catch people at work because it's the easiest way to find them. The cops came to the place where my father works. I found out about that while I was at the skateshop where Boris works. I was so worried. Then the mobilization started. Now we have a real enemy to fight.

I'm more afraid of living than dying. My worst fear is that I'll lose Boris and Sparky [their dog]. Then I'll be as good as dead. I can't promise you that we'll be fine. But don't worry.

Love,

Stasa

Salud!

Tonight, around 3:50 AM, Batajnica was attacked. We heard more explosions and saw flashes of light. We can't tell if it was only missiles or planes since they sound very similar. Stasa is pretty

shocked. We've decided to stay in our apartment rather than go down into the shelters because they're too cold. Belgrade has been darkened by the air strikes. During the first attacks, we lost electricity for half an hour. We didn't lose any power tonight. I don't know anything about current casualties. But it seems to me that we're on our way to war.

That's all for now. I don't know when I'm going to be online again.
Until then, stay strong. Stasa and I love you Kevin, you're a great guy.
Hugs,

Stasa and Boris

Zdravo Kevin.

Hey my dearest friend, thank you for your wonderful support. We had a very sleepless night listening to explosions and shaking from the rushes of adrenaline that would follow. This is such a crazy experience. I really don't know what to say. I discovered my feelings for our people and our land. I realized that my desire to protect everyone is much bigger than my hatred for the system.

However, I'm very confused, because I want to fight back, but not under the flag of the current regime. I'm just going to have to wait for

We had a very sleepless night listening to explosions and shaking from the rushes of adrenaline that would follow. This is such a crazy experience.

I really don't know what to say.

my time to come. Guerrilla actions against NATO troops sound very romantic to me, but that's my revolutionary sentimentalism coming to the forefront again.

We're expecting new attacks any moment. I'm going to report back as much as I can. Stay strong. And let the word go around: Revolt!

Love You,

Stasa and Boris.

*Ed Note: Zdravo is Serbo-Croation for "Dear"

Salud,

It's a really hectic situation here. As an Anarchist, I find our present circumstances very confusing. It's easy to be anti-nationalist during peacetime. But as soon as the capitalist fucks start attacking, you have to deal with your emotions. We definitely do not support the policies of Milosevic.

It's 13:17, there isn't much going on. We didn't sleep well because there were air strikes last night. This morning it was quiet and calm in Belgrade. There are folks on the streets forming lines for bread and groceries. People aren't panicking; morale is pretty high. One can tell that we're getting used to situations like this. Independent radio station B92 was shut down two days ago, so I can't tell what the situation

LIFOURINGWARTIME

on the other side of the fence is like.

During the strikes, the media reported that there was a lot of Kosovar terrorist activity conducted by the Kosovo Liberation Army [KLA]. Those reports ought to be taken with a grain of salt because they came from government sources. Since there's a lot of support for the KLA in the activist world right now, even from those people who support the Zapatistas, I'd like to share my thoughts on them: It's well known that the KLA is supported by the US and NATO. I find it hard to write about what's been happening in Kosovo because there isn't any decent information available. But what kind of revolutionaries would receive help from such capitalist forces? Take Bosnia for example. They receive help from NATO and now Bosnians are losing their local culture. Bosnia has become a new market for Coca-Cola and colonialism.

I find it difficult to remain neutral. I'm ready to fight NATO, but I don't want to fight under the flag of this government. However, I think it's better to show your hatred for NATO than your love for Serbia since your love for the Serbian people could be used to support the system.

Love. Revolt. Revolution.

Boris and Stasa.

Hey Kevin, Salud

Everything was fucked for us for the last two days. We were having difficulties with our phone, so we weren't able to read all the awesome messages of support we have received.

Yesterday evening was one of the heaviest attacks yet. We believe that we were assaulted by F-II7 Stealth radar-evading fighters, since

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there was no warning from air raid sirens. We were alerted of the attack by the sounds of explosions southeast of my neighborhood. Right after that, Stasa and I heard the "swoooooosh" sound similar to the ones we heard the day before. Not long after, NATO jets flew right above our heads and then dropped bombs on Batajnica [Batajnica was hit around the clock on a daily basis since the bombings started]. We were able to see the detonations above the buildings.

Our government is hiding information about the bomb attacks for two reasons. First, because the facilities which are being attacked are primarily military installations. Second, out of concern for the morale of the people. When you hear about casualties, you always have to multiply their numbers by 10 or more to get closer to the real figure. The reason why we are never told the truth is because the government does not want us to fall into a state of complete panic and hysteria. It's part of their propaganda campaign, which helps smash the notion that there is such a thing as an independent media. What bullshit!

Love and Rebellion,

Stasa and Boris.

Hey Kevin,

Boris and I talk a lot about the war these days in the darkness of our room while we wait for the bombs to drop. There's so much to it, you know, it can't all be discussed in one letter.

There's a song about Serbia that goes something like this: "Who says, who lies, that Serbia is small? She isn't small, she's been in three wars!" History has a lot to say about us, and the things that are always happening here. Not many people know much about Serbia or the Balkans. There's so much that history can teach us. We were talking about it yesterday during the blackout. The thing that made me laugh was when President Clinton said that the Serbs provoked both World Wars. What a load of crap!

Love,

Stasa

Kevin,

The bombing has started again, and here I am writing more. I think it was an FII7 since no one heard any alarms, just explosions. People are running for cover. I don't know if people are getting tired of this or not. I guess that the purpose of these attacks is to break our spirits by making us panic. We heard that tonight's attacks are going to be the heaviest yet, but take that with a grain of salt since that we won't know until they happen. We'll wait and see.

Love and Rebellion.

Stasa and Boris

Salud to all of you,

We visited Stasa's folks to see what was happening in other neighborhoods in Belgrade. The bombing comes and goes. I'm feeling so desperate. I know that I can't do anything to change the situation.

I'm getting a lot of questions [in e-mails from America] about Serbian army and police genocide towards Albanians. I don't know much about these atrocities, but I have a feeling that it's true. I know the mentality. Even a glue-sniffing chaos punk can tell you that the police state kills. I fear for the lives of innocent people in Kosovo. I'm ashamed because there's not many people who are sympathetic towards the Serbs who know what's really going on.

I don't care for the so-called "liberal" perspective on the conflict since liberals are talking about the genocide currently taking place in

TETTERS ROM/THE IKOSOVO CRISIS

Kosovo in the same way that they'd discuss the latest film. But I do care that there are people out there who are against the system and opposed to NATO. NATO made the situation even worse because it united everyone here against them and brought about "special" laws restricting the media and the right to dissent, especially in regards to "deserters, agents and other 'underminers.'" I could easily be classified as one of them for my beliefs and the reports that I am sending out. Now it has become impossible to initiate the kind of change within the country that could avert more casualties. So big thanks to army fucks!

Next is the Kosovo Liberation Army. There's a lot to say about them. The most important fact to me is the state of women's rights in Kosovo. This makes me ambivalent about the KLA. Kosovo has a patriarchal Islamic culture, influenced by elements of Moslem extremism. I don't mean to offend Moslems, it's just that

the shooting down of an F-117. Or they're being mobilized for the army. Or they're dodging mobilization. So what am I to do? I want to kill, but I want to kill those responsible for this situation in order to bring real change.

Fundamentalism gives me the creeps. Not all Kosovar Albanians are extremists, but the majority of them are like this. What this does is make me feel conflicted. How can I support revolutionaries that are struggling with the assistance of the capitalist machine, who also oppress their own women and children?

I've talked with my mother about this, because she's a nurse and gets to talk to Moslems from Kosovo. My mother has a friend who is not a typical Albanian woman. Her friend stood up to her tradition, got an education—which is usually denied women in Kosovo, except in the cities—and became a doctor. She's not into getting married either. If I could talk with her and give her some 'zines, I'm sure she'd get into stuff like Riot Grrrl. Anyway, the point of telling you all of this is that this war has three sides, last but not least the Serbian one, which always argues that it has history on its side. But no one gives a fuck about history anymore. Serbs do, but only when their asses are on the line, just like any other nation.

Regardless, it's still important to distinguish between Serbians in uniforms and Serbian civilians. That's something that all the propaganda on CNN doesn't do when it talks about the Serbian people. Uniformed Serbs massacre innocent Albanian civilians, not the Serbs who live in Kosovo. I'm sure that many of the Serbs who live there are racists, but you still can't bomb people for not understanding their neighbors.

I can't see an end to this situation. People are being killed, and its only going to get worse since NATO isn't thinking about declaring a cease-fire any time soon. Our government is into revenge and retribution. The KLA is always staging new attacks, committed to fighting until

its last man drops. It makes me feeling like sticking my revolutionary beliefs where the sun doesn't shine because it's clear that they're not going to save lives and they're certainly not going to kill Milosevic either. Right now, folks in central Belgrade are celebrating the shooting down of an F-II7. Or they're being mobilized for the army. Or they're dodging mobilization. So what am I to do? I want to kill, but I want to kill those responsible for this situation in order to bring real change.

Boris

Salud My Dear Friend,

I'm sorry if you were worried sick about us, but we've had connection problems. I'm trying to remain optimistic, but it's very hard to do under such circumstances. I can't believe all the shit that's going on. I'm disgusted with all the propaganda. It makes me feel incredibly spiteful. If I lived in America or one of the more progressive Western European countries, I'm sure I'd kick ass and do a lot of damage. But I'm desperate here. I can't do anything to increase my freedom, so I feel helpless. If someone decided to cut off our connection to the Internet, I'd be voiceless too. And I've already been shot.

But words still do more damage than weapons can. I'm an aggressor, a killer Serb. I'm an underdog. I'm underprivileged. I hope for revolution. I desire change. I will fight the capitalist boot until its last breath. But I'm alone here. Maybe later there will be

I'm desperate here. I can't do anything to increase my freedom, so I feel helpless. If someone decided to cut off our connection to the Internet, I'd be voiceless too. And I've already been shot.

some people whom I can get organized with so that we can actually do something, or at least say we tried. However, such possibilities look farther and farther away, especially since I feel so stigmatized and there appears that there's no way we can ever get out of this hell.

Love and Revolution,

Boris

Hey People,

A few days ago Boris and I were passing by this huge police head-quarters while we were going to visit my parents. We were wondering whether it was going to be a NATO target. Yesterday, as Boris and I were sleeping with our clothes on, we woke up around three o' clock in the morning only to see the same building on fire on our television set. It was good that they hit their target accurately, because a hospital lies about a hundred meters away. Boris and I spoke about how we hoped that the mothers of children born that night would tell their kids that they were born while bombs were falling all around them.

LIFTURINGWARTIME

Two bridges in Novi Sad were also blown up. Somehow it hurt me as I watched them floating in the Danube. I don't know if there were any civilian casualties. The same thing happened in Bosnia, when they destroyed the bridge in Mostar. That bridge is described in Ivo Andric's Nobel prize winning book Na Drini Cuprija. Mostar's bridge had a deeper meaning. So did the Petrovaradin Bridge. I'm sorry if I sound too patriotic tonight. I really don't know what to say anymore. It's just that Boris was on the phone talking to our friend in Novi Sad when the second bridge was destroyed. Boris heard a hum, followed by an "Oh Shit!" Then the line was disconnected.

Yesterday, many people were standing on the Brankov Bridge in Belgrade, protecting it with their lives. I couldn't ever do that.

The laborers who work in the Zastava factory in Kragujevac formed a human shield around the factory in order to protect their workplace. They sit there day and night, taking shifts. If you hear that

The laborers who work in the Lastava factory in Kragujevac formed a human shield around the factory in order to protect their workplace. They sit there day and night, taking shifts. If you hear that NATO hit that plant, there's going to be a lot of dead civilians.

NATO hit that plant, there's going to be a lot of dead civilians. The question this makes me ask is whether Serbs really count as humans.

It's not nice being stigmatized, especially by fucks like Western countries. No insult intended—I'm not thinking about Westerners in general, but their capitalist governments. Who needs them anyway? Who gives a fuck what they think of you. The problem is that you're not immune from their power. That's why I get emotional every time I hear some fucker in a suit talking about the value of "human lives." For Christ's sake, he eats 'em for lunch! I hate them because they are hypocrites. It's the same situation with those sold out Communists that we have here. The only difference is that they have less power and less opportunities.

I hate the position I'm in right now. All I can do is get frustrated because there's absolutely nothing I can do to change the situation. I feel like I'm already dead and in a way, I am because the media has already shot me. Their words do a lot more damage than NATO bombs ever will. All I have left are this computer and its shitty connection to the Internet. The moment they take these things away from me, I'll be more than dead. I'll be buried alive, underneath piles of lies and misdeeds.

But for right now, I feel almost speechless. All that's left of me is a far away voice, somewhere in the heart of the Balkans, talking about the injustices and the broken hearts of people that were killed many times over. Just people—ordinary folks—with their history, their culture, their revolutions and their struggles. Some are heroes, and some are skeletons in the closet. We are not better than the rest. But we're not the worst.

Boris and Stasa, dreaming of a revolution

Salud,

Last night there were no attacks on Belgrade. But in other cities there was a lot of destruction. In Aleksinac, a small miner's town, only civilian targets were hit. At least five people were killed and many more were injured. Can you believe this? NATO also tried to hit the last remaining bridge in Novi Sad, but they failed.

Today is also an important anniversary. 58 years ago, Belgrade was first attacked by the Nazis. Bombs dropped by German planes killed 2000 people and injured many, many more. This is just a small historical reminder, since it's happening all over again.

Love,

Boris

We're Back!

First off, we've spent the last two days doing everything there is to do about finishing our immigration stuff. It took us a very long time to do it all, but we finished it. Now all we have to do is wait for my passport and for the chance to get out. That's not going to be that soon, I know. But the main thing is that I'll have a passport when the time is right. We'll let you know when and how and if. That's the good news.

You know the woman that works there almost fooled us. She said that they are not giving passports to anyone beyond the age of 14. So we came back and went directly to speak to the woman that works on that matter. We gave her our identification and she said, "Yes, you can get the passport." So it was cool. The only thing that she couldn't tell me is when it'll be ready. It usually takes 10 days, but because of the wartime situation, it will take longer. I'll call and find out if it's finished.

Belgrade looks normal, with the occasional bombed out building here and there. Nonetheless, it still looks scary. There's this building that looks

There's this building that looks like a cake that had been melted down on one of its sides. There are buildings that have been entirely burned. I fear that this kind of life will become our everyday routine.

like a cake that had been melted down on one of its sides. There are buildings that have been entirely burned. I fear that this kind of life will become our everyday routine. You know that spring is on the way: Beautiful weather, sun, greenery, lovely days that are long and warm. But as the night approaches your fear rises and you spend the night awake or sleeping with your clothes on, waiting for the humming sounds of bombs and missiles. It looks like the Martians are attacking us, not some visible, foreign force.

I think about lots of things these days. I wish that more people could understand exactly what is going on, not picking sides or anything. It seems to me that the people will lose interest in this because

TETTERS ROM/THE KOSOVO CRISIS

it's old news. I'm afraid that people don't see any problem with anything as long as it stays out of their backyard. Like why they should even care if some people die because of the bombings that their country is doing somewhere in this world, in some place they can't even find on the map—not to mention knowing anything about that country and it's people. This shit is happening all around the world, not just in Serbia. The citizens of the country that is responsible for all this death and destruction say "Hey, why should it concern me? There's nothing I can do about it." Yet they'll claim that they live in a free, democratic world. In that kind of world you ought to be able to do something about it, right?

Sometimes Boris is closed to himself. I'd like to share my thoughts with him, but frequently he's like a mirror and repeats everything I say. I'd like to speak to him about this whole mess, to discuss the history of our people, and talk about what the foreign media is saying because I want to have as clear an opinion as possible about what's happening. I don't want to go astray by developing the kinds of opinions that can easily grow out of a terrible situation like this. It looks to me like I'm not thinking correctly about what's happening. Am I? I feel like nobody believes us because of where we are. But I'll be the first to tell anyone that I'm not afraid to admit the Yugoslav government's mistakes. However, I'm fed up with people demonizing us since not all of us support the war. I know that the right people will not get the wrong impression about us, but the majority of people who can turn this around will never think otherwise.

I'm sorry if I always sound like I'm addressing the whole world when I write to you, but it's because of the previous letters. There's so much on my mind these days that I'm not able to discuss everything with Boris. So I write it all down when I write my letters to you, my friend.

Boris and I talked with my mother about going away. She was sad because I can't finish my studies. I'm sad because of that too. In America it costs too much, I'm not sure that we could afford it. I love to study architecture. I'm afraid I'm going to lose my chance of being what I want to be in life due to all of this. I know that there are also many people who'll lose more than a chance to educate themselves. And for what? It's all so pointless.

I don't know what the use of writing these reports is anymore. Everybody knows what's going on. I watch Sky News [British cable news, available all over Europe] when I'm home and all they show about this conflict are pictures of fleeing Albanian refugees and our cities being set on fire. Everybody can find out what NATO has hit, when they did it and how it looks. I wish we could talk with people abroad about the more important subjects, like the inherent evilness of all governments, the aggressiveness of capitalist economies and all sorts of bad things playing in front of our eyes. The point is that the things that happen to millions and millions of people around the world also happen here. But in this atmosphere, you can lose your focus and think that you're the only one suffer-

ing. I wish that people everywhere could fight in their countries in their own ways for the ultimate freedom, while still knowing that it's impossible to achieve it.

Love,

Stasa

Hey,

Stasa got me feeling like a bad guy. I'm not all that bad! I wish she could understand me. Maybe she's going to read this, so she can find something out about me that she wants to know. This war has had a terrible impact on me, more than I am able to show. Even though I don't want to be like my father, I've inherited some of his behaviors—like acting tough so I can demonstrate that the situation is not getting to me. Actually it's doing a lot. I'm confused. I have mixed emotions. I suffer from doubts, anger, fear and feelings of helplessness.

I'm sure that Stasa is having trouble with my political side too. I'm just like that, because I'm very passionate about the things that I believe in. I don't want to make Stasa feel bad. My opinions tend to overpower me. Sometimes I open my mouth and out comes politics. Oops! There's so much going on in my head that I tend to sound like a brain-

It reminds me of when I heard that one of my friends drowned. I just couldn't believe it. And I still can't—I") still expect to see or hear from him. Its not like we were all that close, but it was real. He was a living, breathing person whom I knew, and the next minute he was dead. The bombing is the same for me.

washed moron—or a religious fanatic. The problem is that politics overcome me. I'm not strong enough to resist it. However, love is stronger than pride, and I'm able to make up for my misdeeds. I just want people to see me as a simple, regular guy. That's the kind of person I am. I'm a special person, but no more special than the next guy. I wonder what all the great people who have read our letters will think of us when the war is over. But I can't help but think about whether people would be listening to me if there wasn't a war going on. I don't want this writing we're doing about our situation to be my career. It's nothing exceptional or brave. I just felt that since you're my friend that you ought to know about all the important things that are happening here, and that it's a lot more real than what you see on the fucking television.

Nothing has changed. I still can't believe that I'm a part of this theater. It reminds me of when I heard that one of my friends drowned. I just couldn't believe it. And I still can't—I still expect to see or hear from him. It's not like we were all that close, but his death was real. He was a living, breathing person who I knew, and the next minute he was dead.

The bombing is the same for me. But I'm not that scared because bombs are not dropping everywhere, nor are thousands of people

LIFEDURINGWARTIME

being injured and killed. However it's still pretty fucked up here. You hear about how people were accidentally killed by missiles that have missed their targets, but you never see them because it's always far away. Even when the raids are two miles away, it still seems like its all very distant, far enough to not be frightening, but close enough to make me feel very vulnerable and powerless to change what's happening. What is there to do in such a situation? How do you react? Do you sing? Do you fight? With whom are we fighting?

It seems like we're at war with Mars, but we're told it's we who are the barbarians. I'm not scared of dying. If the situation gets

our country bringing its "New World Order" with it, I will have to fight. I have to, because I am an anti-capitalist. But I won't be a part of

my country's army.

worse and NATO invades our country bringing its "New World Order" with it, I will have to fight. I have to, because I am an anticapitalist. But I won't be a part of my country's army. I will not bow down to its lies, even though I find it hard these days to adopt a flag burning mentality.

I was talking with Stasa about burning the Serbian flag. We both agreed that we wouldn't have the strength to do it. We both feel so threatened by this situation that something has cracked in our heads. All of the sudden we began to feel slightly patriotic. It's not a nationalist thing though-that's not the point. The Serbian people's past is really glorious. And the Serbs themselves are glorious people. There hasn't been a time in history when Serbs weren't betrayed, killed or in some way tortured by the outside world. That's why I can't accept the fact that the Serbian people are now being characterized as aggressors. Yet I still see many of us acting immorally. I've seen us turn into butchers-killers with Serbian national emblems on their sleeves—and I did something about it. I threw away my past because I was ashamed of them. I burned our flag and spit on the cross that Serbs pray to. Do you know what I found out? That most people don't know how to deal with the legacy of their bad histories-they identify with them instead.

I heard a Slovenian anarchist telling someone that "Serbs are the only ones to blame." He forgot to discriminate between the Serbian people and the Serbian government. What's up with the Slovenian government? Isn't it responsible for murder? I don't mean to sound like I'm drowing in my own self-pity, but Serbian history is a lot more complicated than such over-simplifications lead you to believe. For example, history has shown that Serbians tend to kill one another because they disagree with each other's beliefs. It's a history of brother killing brother. One brother was a Communist, the other was a Fascist. After the Second World War,

Communists put Fascists on trial! The point is that every nation hides from its past. Yet today, young people are condemned for their parent's crimes back then, like whether your father was a Chetnik or not ["Chetnik" was a term used to identify Serbian Fascists who collaborated with the Nazis during the Second World War]. That's what's going on. I'm proud that my people are like this. If you're guilty, you're guilty. It doesn't matter if you're my brother—scary, isn't it?

I guess I'm into a righteous Socialist trip—"People's Justice" and all. But we have to talk a lot more about all this, because it's a very complicated matter. I'm very sorry that I've bothered you with all of this, I won't do it anymore, especially brag about this and that. I just had so much on my mind. Writing to you allowed me to get a lot off of my chest. We can laugh and make jokes later.

Boris

PS. Stasa and I joked about our punk wedding. Are there going to be By the Grace of God, Undertow and Submission Hold reunions?

Here's the latest action news:

The PVO (Yugoslav Air Defense Forces) began firing like mad around 23:20 or so. What a sight to see. There were many red and yellow flashes, and lots and lots of loud noises. As usual, we were sleeping, but the detonations woke us up. The air strike is still in effect. We can hear occasional firing from our antiaircraft artillery. Maybe you don't know this, but NATO's aircraft has made many mistakes in this "humanitarian" action that they're currently engaging in. If you'll recall, Stasa wrote to you earlier about how the workers from the Zastava factory were defending their workplace with their lives by posing as human shields. Well, they failed to do so. Last night the factory was bombed. More than 140 workers were injured. NATO knew that civilians were defending the plant, but they bombed it anyway. They obviously didn't give a fuck.

Pristina [the capital of the Serbian province of Kosovo-Metohija] is suffering the same fate. Several days ago we saw some pictures of what's been happening there, and civilian casualties appeared to be heavy. The city was in flames, and buildings were destroyed. There were injured people everywhere. It looked really fucked. Again I ask: Do bombs really know how to discriminate between nationalities? Being a victim is not the sole domain of Albanian children. What could NATO really be thinking?

Kevin told me that despite all of the humanitarian talk, most Americans still believe that, "Their boys are doing a good thing." I'm very grateful to all of you guys that are spending your time reading our thoughts and words of confusion and struggle. We're fucked. And we're helpless. Not just because of the bombing either, but because there is so much evil being generated by all of this, starting with our hatred of the Albanian separatists and the totalitarianism of the Milosevic regime, all the way to capitalist nations' fears of our little country.

TETTERS ROM/THE KASOVO CRISIS

Isn't it silly that only one man, Slobodan Milosevic, can be blamed for all of the wars in this region? Milosevic is an evil fuck, but it's also important to remember that he's also a puppet master. His strength lies in his manipulation of the media and the police. But Milosevic is no Hitler—Hitler had a real vision, and a very powerful army. That's why he had such an effect on the world. He also had a lot of help from the Allies. However, this is no time for a course in history. I just wanted to tell you that no matter what you hear or think about Milosevic, people like him exist everywhere—every country has it's own Milosevic. Don't underestimate this.

It's impossible for us to fight ours. Especially because NATO has caused our people to unite around Milosevic. That's a tragedy—now I have no idea how we're ever going to get rid of the bastard.

Please, no matter how much you hate Milosevic, don't support this charade any longer since it's killing people and the war is spiraling out of control. Besides, you can't hate Milosevic more than we do because we've been affected by his bullshit for years. Don't worry about our fight. Hate your own Milosevics and all the fuckers who caused all our lives to become so miserable, including your own. Then we'll really be able to start changing things. Stay angry my friends.

Love and revolution,

Boris and Stasa

PS. Stasa can't write anything since she fell asleep. It's quiet. Now we can rest.

Salud Mi Amigo,

I don't know where to start. It was a hectic week for the both of us. Let me tell you what happened. We were at Stasa's place. After a little while, we fell asleep, only to be awakened by the sound of chain detonations that were incredibly close by. Damn, it was frightening. It was the closest that the war had ever gotten to us. After two or three hours, we decided to ignore the explosions and get some sleep, no matter what that sleep was. I can't tell you anything other than that it was a really "new" experience for us.

How many of us need to die before they reach some sort of agreement? I know that Milosevic will sell us down the river just as he did in previous conflicts. I'm sure that the vultures of the free world are going to be here to grab their share.

It's fucked that all I can talk about is the war. The situation is getting worse with each day that passes by. My hatred and anger towards the system is back. It'll be even worse as the war wears on, I'm sure. I apologize that there is no good news to share with you. I feel depressed, paralyzed and hopeless as usual. What a combination, eh? The war seems to be controlling our lives. We've become so familiar with the sounds of bombs detonating that we've actually learned how

to sleep through them.

I really can't see an end to this crisis. The actions of this regime scare me. I'm angry, but I cannot see any possibilities for armed revolt against Milosevic. NATO ground troops invading Serbia are a serious possibility, but I never want to see their faces. The problem is that no one is ready to rebel. Even if they did, we'd have to fight a war of liberation while NATO is bombing us. In that instance, all we'd be doing is making it safe for the West to "Coca-Colonialize" our land. There will be no revolution here.

To make matters even worse, the independent media has been silenced. Radio station B92 is history. All the newspapers are censored. All that is left is oppression. More and more people I know are being taken away by the military and the police. They are being mobilized in preparation for a NATO invasion. The thought of a ground war scares me, especially since NATO will be here fighting on behalf of the "fat cats," who will profit from the conflict no matter who wins. The same holds true for the "free-world" fucks and liberals, who no matter what happens, always get away with it. How many

Hitler once said that the Serbian people are meant to be tortured. It seems like all of his teachings were well learned by the free world.

of us need to die before they reach some sort of agreement? I know that Milosevic will sell us down the river just as he did in previous conflicts. I'm sure that the vultures of the free world are going to be here to grab their share.

In the event that there is a settlement, tortured bodies are going to be used for the rebuilding of our country. History is going to be rewritten once again. The most painful thing is that no one will care about anything—about what's happening to their lives in the present, or about recalling correctly what's happened in the past.

It's so hard for me to face up the fact that we are suffering the same fate as people in Rwanda, Afghanistan, Vietnam and Iraq. I used to think of those countries as extremely far off places. I failed to understand because of the way my opinions were shaped by the media and by propaganda. But I bought the bullshit. I really didn't think that it couldn't happen here. Now I know that we were meant to be slaves who serve anyone with power, regardless of whether it's foreign or domestic. The point is that their policies are always the same, and so are their effects, which are exploitative, lying and torturous. This war is a fight between predators, over a piece of land, where the natives stand as helpless figures who passively wait for their destiny to materialize.

Hitler once said that the Serbian people are meant to be tortured. It seems like all of his teachings were well learned by the free world.

So what can I really tell you my friend? We are living in darkness. Our lights can't stay on for much longer. What will happen to us?

Boris

Voice & Space: the Move Towards Community Radio in Washington, DC

manda Huron can tell you about community-based radio. As a radio activist of many years, she's well versed in the language of both community organizing and radio technology. She can talk to you with ease about the politics of neighborhoods as well as the best equipment for field recording. But all of what she knows is said simplest and best on a sticker on her kick drum: BE YOUR OWN RADIO.

Over a year ago, Huron attended a conference in Philadelphia for East Coast microbroadcasters (microbroadcast is defined as low wattage, community-centered radio). When Amanda came back to DC, she was excited about the possibility of strengthening efforts to create such a station in her home.

What began as discussion among friends fueled by the Philadelphia conference resulted in organizing a similar conference this past October in DC entitled "Micropower Showdown at the FCC" (Federal Communications Commission). Huron organized the two-day event with the help of friends she had met at the Philadelphia conference. Pete Tri Dish and Ann Tennah, two former players in Mutiny Radio, a West Philadelphia micro-station shut down by the FCC, offered their expertise. The DC conference was successful, drawing microbroadcasters, both avid and amateur, from all over the country.

The first day of the conference consisted of workshops and a live broadcast in the evening—which went unchallenged by the FCC despite the breach of airwave regulations. On the second day, conference attendees protested current FCC policy outlawing small radio broadcasts by marching to the FCC. Many participants met with their senators to lobby for legislative reform surrounding the issue of legalizing low-wattage stations.

The Mount Pleasant Broadcasting Club grew from activities at the DC conference as well as from interest from other neighborhood groups such as Stand for Our Neighbors and MESA (Movement towards Empowerment and Solidarity through the Arts). There had been discussion surrounding the idea of a radio station for over a year, but the club held its first formal meeting in January. "A radio station seemed like the next logical step for everything that was going on in the neighborhood at the time," explains Huron, one of the six people responsible for starting the club. The formation of the MBC couldn't have been timed better.

Shortly following the DC conference, the FCC issued a notice of proposed rule-making, in which it claimed interest in extending legal protection to smaller stations.

The FCC invited comments on how micropower radio might be regulated effectively. The MBC has taken advantage of this situation by issuing a number of proposals to the FCC on how to refine current laws regarding smaller stations.

However, opponents of the reform have also been submitting comments. One of the major opponents of legalized micropower stations, the National Association of Broadcasters, claims its primary concern is technical interference by the smaller stations. A greater

problem for the NAB to contend with is the reality that listeners are likely to tune in to community-run radio for more diverse and relevant programs than those available on corporate radio. With the money that the NAB has for lobbying, microradio activists like the MBC will face substantial opposition. But for the first time ever, it seems as if the FCC may be willing to listen to the little guy.

Huron contends this shift in stance on microradio can be partially attributed to the FCC's new chairman. William Kennard, the FCC's first African-American chair, has spoken publicly about his personal commitment to increase community involvement in smaller stations. He was sharply criticized at a recent conference of the NAB for his dedication to pro-micropower legislation.

According to the Public Broadcasting Report from April 23, 1999, Senate Communications Chair Conrad Burns (R-Mont.) rejected Kennard's assessment of a need for small radio stations, saying, "I've had all the diversity I can stand." David Fisk, Public Relations Director at the FCC, did not respond to *Punk Planet*'s calls regarding the current status of microbroadcast legislation.

Kennard's interest comes at a time when it's needed most. Radio became less accessible to communities starting in 1996 when the Telecommunications Act changed the possibilities of radio ownership in this country. Prior to this law, companies could not own more than 40 stations nationwide, with no more than two AM and two FM stations in a given city. Now there are no limits on the number of stations a company can own across the country, with restrictions only on how many per city.

In a large market such as DC, companies are capable of owning up to eight stations. Today, the four biggest radio companies—Chancellor Media, Infinity Broadcasting, Clear Channel Communications, and Jacor Communications (which is in the process of merging with Clear Channel)—own nearly 1200 stations across the country. In DC, Chancellor Media alone owns eight stations.

For Huron, microradio is the logical response to the stifling of community voice by corporate monopolies. Her first experience with community radio was in 1990 when she lived in St. Paul, Minnesota. While in college there, she played in the hardcore band Impetus Inter, and radio was a tool for her to bring the innovative music she was discovering in the punk scene to a more public, accessible domain. Huron's show on KFAI, a community station she remembers fondly, allowed her to share music with the community at large. In addition to her broadcasts, she volunteered in the station's newsroom as well.

When she first moved to DC, Huron got a job at Soundprint, a company that produces public radio documentaries. After this, she spent nine months at National Public Radio. She currently works at the Latin American Youth Center in Mount Pleasant on the after-school project Youth Radio DC. Here, Huron is able to do work that has inspired her for years, challenging community youth between the ages of 15-18 to create their own broadcasts.

Senate Communications Chair Conrad Burns rejected FCC chair Kennard's assessment

by Katy Otto



Through Amanda's day job at the Latin American Youth Center, she has been able to connect with members of her community who are systematically overlooked in discussions of neighborhood affairs—minority youth. She has used her skills with radio production to facilitate young people's ideas for what sorts of programs would best serve their community. Her students presented one of their pieces a couple of weeks ago at the Forum on Violence, which was held at the Mount Pleasant Library. This particular piece consisted of interviews the students conducted with other youth. The interviews dealt with provocative subject matter—did they feel protected in their neighborhoods? Were the police offering them adequate support? Did they feel as if their opinions were given sufficient weight in the community?

According to Huron, the response at the Forum was encouraging. She believes students were able to be more honest about violence in their area since they were talking to their peers. This sort of project is exactly the kind of thing that microradio could supply: the ability to connect with peers across a shared community and at a peer level.

Mount Pleasant is home to immigrants and refugees, artists and musicians, the elderly and the young. There are substantial Latin and Vietnamese populations, and language barriers serve to isolate many from traditional avenues for public discourse regarding the community. At the heart of the MBC is the desire for real connection among members of an ethnically and economically diverse neighborhood.

"The club is about giving voice and space to people whose voices are rarely heard in other public forums, such as town meetings or the Internet," MBC's Natalie Avery explains. "It came out of everything else that has been going on in this neighborhood for the past two years."

Natalie is also involved with Stand for Our Neighbors and MESA, whose membership often overlaps with the MBC. One MESA concert included the All-Scars, local go-go band High Image, the Savage Boys and Girls Club, and hip-hop performers. This concert was one event in a series entitled "What a DJ Really Is," which arose from an idea that 23-year-old Roberto Sanchez presented to Avery. He stressed that "a DJ doesn't just play one sort of music, but needs to satisfy the whole community." He envisioned this sort of a show when he first encountered Avery in the neighborhood.

"I remember meeting Natalie at a show where there was a punk rock band playing downstairs, some Spanish folks out front, and some black people upstairs," Sanchez says. "I told Natalie that we should put on events that would appeal to all of these groups." Sanchez is currently involved with engineering for the MBC.

"Surprising networks and relationships have been built out of these communities," Avery remarks. She emphasizes that the events planned are meant to encompass more than mere spectatorship or "multi-culti talent shows;" rather they are outlets for members of the neighborhood to view and participate in one another's artistic endeavors.

Avery recalls the first neighborhood meetings she and Huron attended two years ago. "Amanda and I were part of a punk scene, living in a neighborhood on the verge of gentrification. It is important that we as artists come to terms with our own role in facilitating this. We should ask ourselves how we can make this more than a lifestyle choice, more about challenging the structure than just coming into an area and playing our shows."

Natalie has occupied a prominent role in the DC punk community for years, playing first in Fire Party, then the Stigmatics, and now in Scaramouche, along with Huron. The two women also run the independent label Brickthrower, as well as a zine of the same name. Being a part of the punk community is as important to the two women as being a part of their neighborhood.

The connection between the punk community and community radio is growing. A benefit concert organized by Natalie and two members of the DC band the Savage Boys and Girls Club helped to introduce a lot of people in the city's punk community to the activities of the MBC. On April 24th, the Make*Up played with the newly reformed Bratmobile and the Savage Boys and Girls Club at the Wilson Center in Mount Pleasant, raising awareness and \$1300 for the MBC. Members of all of the bands had previous involvement and interest in the plans for a community radio station.

Michael Cotterman and Angela Melkisethian of the Savage Boys and Girls Club have been working with the MBC from the start. Both attend the University of Maryland, College Park, and have participated in the campus radio station. However, Melkisethian wants to be involved in broadcast in her own community.

"There's nothing for people to listen to on the radio—people need outlets for more local information such as community meetings and immigration policies, issues that might receive national attention but whose local scope should also be addressed." Melkisethian says. "Language barriers keep people in this community from socializing, and I like how the club has helped to combat that."

Alison Wolfe, front woman for Bratmobile, felt there was no better place for her band's first DC appearance in four years than the April 24th benefit show. "This has a lot to do with how Bratmobile started in the first place. We wanted to be creative for ourselves and to create our own scene," Wolfe explains. "I'm excited about the idea of integrating music and art with neighborhood politics," she adds.

It is this idea that is the cornerstone of the MBC—an idea that for the first time has the possibility of becoming a legal reality. The fate of the MBC—and organizations like it across the US—rests in the hands of the FCC. If the power of people's voices can drown out the power of the lobbyist's dollars, then the dreams of the MBC founders may come true.

To learn more about the Mount Pleasant Microbroadcasting Club, contact: Mount Pleasant Broadcasting Club
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Sexual Mutants of the Multiculture

by Annalee Newitz "For years, I articulated my racial politics by fucking. In fact, that's how I articulated all my politics. No one was too strange, too ugly, too different for me to fall in love with them, even if it was only for a day."

Miscegenation: marriage or sexual relations between a man and a woman of different races.

- from Webster's New World Dictionary

y parents grew up in segregated neighborhoods. Cynthia was raised in a small Texas town where everybody she knew was white and Christian. Marty lived in a Jewish section of the San Fernando Valley in California. His school was so Jewishdominated that the team chant was "Hit 'em in the kischkes!" At some point during their courtship, which began during their days at a less segregated high school, my mother decided to convert to Judaism. She did so several years later, studying Jewish history and culture with a reform rabbi and professor at UCLA where she was attending college.

But her ethnic transformation, although legal under reform Jewish law, would never be complete. To my father's parents, she was still an interloper. It was as if Christianity were written into her very DNA, as unchangeable as blue eyes and blonde hair. And, I must admit, I have never thought of her as Jewish either. She is my WASP mother.

So I have come to be an ethnic hybrid: half-WASP, half-Jew, the product of two supposedly segregated identities. Such a condition lends itself easily to jokes. If you combine my heritage with that of my partner, you get one Jew and one Christian. If you combine my heritage with my partner and our friends up the street, you get I.2 Jews, 2 Brits, .5 Scots-Irish, .5 Italian, .01 African American, and of course the inevitable imaginary .0001 Native American.

What this laundry list of ethnicities manages to explain is the extent to which all racial identities are already hopelessly miscegenated. Nevertheless, the terms "race" and "ethnicity" grow out of the old-fashioned idea that there are measurable, anatomical differences between such groups that make them obviously distinct. Even "multiculturalism," a concept which suggests racial plurality, takes for granted that racial groups can co-exist peacefully only by maintaining cultural separations and particularities. But the "multiculture" might more aptly be understood as a series of cultures that are being experienced all at once, often in a single individual or group. The racial logic of multiculturalism should be conceived of as "multiple and hybridizing," not as "separate and plural." To acknowledge this would simply be to admit what we've known all along.

JEWISH SANDWICHES

Fetishes are only symbols, highly compacted stories that subliminally signal their fuller meanings. - Robert Stoller

For my parents' and grandparents' generation, being Jewish meant being part of "the Jewish race." They were part of a not-quitewhite racial category, caught between assimilating into dominant

WASP culture and finding themselves cast out of it. Although most Eastern European Jews could "pass" as white, their religious and cultural heritage made them a breed apart, a group that would have to be taught the ways of American Christianity (aka American Whiteness) whether they liked it or not.

Although my father's elementary school was 99 percent Jewish, they were forced to have a Christmas pageant every year. My mother's parents called Jews "clannish," accusing them memorably of "eating greasy food" (telling me this story, my mother bursts out laughing, "A Southerner saying that someone else ate greasy food!") "I'm always amazed that Marty was able to like me," she adds, "because he hated Christians so much."

I used to ask them all the time what brought them together into the unlikely union that made me. It all came down to a sandwich.

"I saw Marty eating these gigantic sandwiches for lunch," my mother told me. "I'd only ever had these white bread sandwiches, with one slice of meat and mayonnaise. Maybe there would be a layer of lettuce, but I don't think so. I had to find out why this guy was eating such huge sandwiches."

The fetishization of the "other" through food is so American. We avoid thinking about the way "difference" often means "subjugation" by trying to convert social identity into tasty, consumable objects. We come to know people by consuming them.

But my mother was consumed instead.

"I had always assumed, not knowing that there could be any other alternative, that Marty would convert to Christianity," she explains to me as my father watches her from across the room.

"But I would never have done that," he cuts in. "That just wasn't an option. Christians were the enemy."

"But why did you want to be Jewish?" I ask Cynthia. "Was it a way of escaping your family?"

"Yes, my family was very... narrow-minded. To me, Jews seemed cosmopolitan, sophisticated. In Marty's family, people talked out loud, and spoke their minds. And they were a handsome family, not the stereotype of the wrinkled, hunched people my mother imagined," she explains.

"You know, I don't think of you as Jewish," I tell her. "Didn't you think I might wonder why your mother celebrated Christmas?"

"Well no, I never thought of that," she replies, giggling. Then, seriously, "But I feel like a Jew, as if I have more in common with Jews. People see me as Jewish. Maybe being Jewish did allow me to see my own culture-Southern Christian culture-as somewhat alien. It seems alien to me now."

My partner enters the conversation. "People would definitely think you are a Jew," he says, "most Jews would."

It's true. Cynthia has been Jewish for more of her life than she

has been white. I, on the other hand, have been white and Jewish for exactly the same amount of time. In fact, I have been white and Jewish simultaneously. One could argue that such an experience is the very essence of being Jewish in the United States today, especially if you have pale skin and blue eyes like I do. Looking at me, most people would think "white" rather than "Jew."

Yet the not-quite-whiteness of being Jewish has never gone away. When I declare myself Jewish, or part-Jewish, people do respond to me differently. Being Jewish is not usually something people see immediately; they can't prejudge me they way they would an African-American or Asian-American. But once they know that I'm Jewish, many of their preconceptions shift, and I seem suddenly strange. They have to gather more data to feel comfortable. "Are you kosher?" they'll ask, or, "Are you religious?" Then there's my favorite, "Do you speak Jewish?" I wouldn't describe any of these questions as anti-Semitic, only as indicative of the way being Jewish somehow marks you as "other"—as needing some kind of an explanation. When you're white, it's far more rare that you're asked to explain your identity. Most people don't regard whiteness as a race, only as the absence of it. However wrongheaded this attitude may be, it's the kind of "common sense" that constitutes our first impressions of one another.

LEAVING WILLIAMSBURG

I go out to breakfast with my partner's family in Long Beach. His grandmother Dorothy, from the Jewish side of his family, is there with her boyfriend, Charles. We talk about the past.

"I'm from Williamsburg, do you know it?" Charles asks me. I don't. He is shocked, then amused. "It's the Orthodox section of New York."

"C'mon Charles, they don't know about that," Dorothy teases him. But I'm interested—I'm always interested to hear about the past. I ask to know more.

"My father wanted me to be a rabbi," Charles says, "but I rebelled because I wanted to be an engineer." I try to imagine a scenario in which a Jew becoming an engineer would constitute rebellion. It's like watching someone eat a sandwich stuffed with some bizarre form of vegetable—you want to get up close and find out what it is.

"Wasn't it hard for Jews to get into college in those days? Didn't they screen you to make sure they weren't admitting too many Jews?" I ask.

"Yes, that's what they did," Charles says, "so I became a teacher."

Several months later, we go out to dinner with them in Los Angeles. Charles and Dorothy have just been to see me give a book reading in which I talked about whiteness and stereotypes of whiteness.

"I never had to deal with white people when I was growing up," Charles says. "It was in Williamsburg." He looks at me. This time I do know it, and I remember.

"What you had to deal with was really horrible," I say, referring to anti-Semitism in the early twentieth century. But in retrospect, I realize what I said was ambiguous. Charles takes me to mean that growing up in a restrictive Orthodox environment was horrible. He couldn't agree more.

MISCEGENATION BLUES

I think I must have tried, like every kid, to imitate my parents' relationship. When I started dating, I developed a predilection for people who came from a biracial or biethnic background. I also dated outside my race, usually ending up with Asian-Americans—who enjoy the dubious privilege of having inherited the "model minority" label once reserved for Jews.

My first true love was Korean-American, and I was his ultimate "other." His Christian, traditional parents were more than a little reluctant to allow their only son to date a Jewish white girl. They referred to me as "that American girl." When I came to visit his family once, I was filled with shame when I awkwardly took off my shoes inside the door, nearly stumbling in my effort to demonstrate cultural sympathy. What was ridiculous was that I took off my shoes every day to enter my own house. But I felt suddenly, stupidly white in that long-ago boyfriend's house. I was an invader, a son-stealer, grubby-fingered and clumsy. Later that same year, his older sister, a church-going woman, came home late one night to find him in bed with me. That clinched it. I was a slut, just like all the other white American girls.

Being Jewish was easy compared to that. It made me interesting, gave me a special angle on things. I knew how stupid Christmas was several years before the other kids knew it. As a Jew, I could do things in the name of Judaism that would have gotten someone else in trouble. I gave a book report to my ninth grade class on Philip Roth's novel The Ghost Writer, about a young man who is sexually obsessed with Anne Frank. Dressed as "the writer," I read a long soliloquy from the novel which praised the erotic magnetism of a dead girl, the seductiveness of the ultimate Jewish victim. What kind of teacher would risk forbidding me to read erotica out loud to a ninth grade class when I was doing it for Judaism?

Anti-Semitism was not allowed at my high school, at least not out in the open. Once some boys in the hallway yelled "dirty Jew" at me during lunch. I wheeled around, glowered, and screamed "FUCK YOU!" at the top of my lungs, giving them the finger too, just for good measure. A teacher tried to write me up for yelling obscenities in the hall. "They called me a "dirty Jew!" I explained. "But is that how you should respond?" he asked condescendingly. "Yes," I replied and never heard another word about it.

When I think about race, fucking—even just the word "fuck"—just seems to come to mind. And, of course, I think of family, which most

"I, the inheritor of their unmade traditions, will have to climb the mutation tree myself and aim for a more just and egalitarian variation on the culture I live in today. I hope this culture will have a place for people whose racial identities are multiple and compounded."

psychologists would agree is a fairly typical connection to make. My sense of my own racial identity always comes back to my parents' miscegenated romance, which has isolated our family from their families for most of my life. Fucking—and worse, breeding—is what made their union scary during the early 1960s. Although there were other conflicts between my parents and their families, I know—having seen the way those purebloods looked at me, the mutant offspring of Jews and hicks—that they were disturbed by what I might represent. I was the hybrid corruption of their own segregated cultures, proof that Jews and whites could mate and even produce something pretty, something smart, something that could yell "FUCK YOU!" and not be sorry at all. I was the living embodiment of their racial and sexual transgression. And I knew it.

As I grew up, my racial identity blurred and changed as I moved from one romance to another. I fell in love with whites who fetishized my Jewish "otherness," women who fetishized my gender-bending butch "otherness," Asian-Americans and blacks who fetishized my white "otherness," and biracials like myself who fetishized my ability to pass as white, my bourgeois "otherness." I was everybody's "other," just as they were mine. Even when I dated nice Jewish boys, I was fascinated by the idea of making it with one of those purebloods—somebody whose Jewish genetics had never been thinned by whiteness. Difference was my fetish. It had to be.

For years, I articulated my racial politics by fucking. In fact, that's how I articulated all my politics. No one was too strange, too ugly, too different for me to fall in love with them, even if it was only for a day. I had to keep reiterating that fundamental difference I saw inside myself, to make every racial relationship sexual, and every sexual relationship racial. Families and couples that were monoracial upset me; they were a personal rejection. When I would see two Asians walking hand-in-hand down the street, I would wonder, "What non-Asian person have they each rejected to get there?" A white family made me ask, "Why did they need to make their children into little racial versions of themselves?"

Later, I turned to theorizing. "You know," I told my students one day in the midst of a discussion on race, "we could eliminate a lot of racial problems in the United States right now if everyone would just agree to breed with people of a different race. Then, the very next generation would have a totally different racial makeup." Everyone laughed. But I was only half-joking.

MULTICULTURAL MUTATION TREE

The Mutation Tree . . . lets you see random variations (or "mutations") of your sphere. Clicking on any of the balls in the mutation tree will produce a new sphere, with randomly determined properties. The higher up the mutation tree you go, the more variation you will see . . .

-from the instruction manual for Kai's Power Tools 3

We are always in the midst of a vast social mutation that could lead us into new ways of being racial and forming racial identity. Indeed, it's fear of the changing racial character of the United States that has motivated the recent outbreak of dysgenic hysteria books like The Bell Curve and Emotional Intelligence, and Darwinian horror movies like Species and Alien Resurrection. These books and movies

all take as their central premise one basic problem: there are "others" out there who are breeding, and they want to breed with "us." The really scary part is that if "they" breed with "us," then it will be a lot harder to separate the "good" races from the "bad" races (whatever you might think those are).

People who identify as more than one race or ethnicity challenge the old, separatist ways of doing things. Since racial separatism is founded on the idea that the races can, in fact, be sorted out into easily defined categories, it is virtually impossible for hybrids like myself to maintain such a system. Even the US census has acknowledged this, and is debating whether to change its categories to include "multiracial."

But what does this mean for us in our everyday lives? Finally, I think, it suggests that progressive social transformations are possible in one lifetime. My mother lives as a Jew, and Charles lives outside Williamsburg. What strikes me about the distance they've both come is how their identities haven't just moved toward idiosyncratic personal goals, but towards a society which is actually capable of recognizing the choices they've made. For my mother really does pass as a Jew, whatever I might think, and Charles can choose from a whole range of Jewish practices that will not restrict him to Orthodoxy. The changes they made in their identities did not take place in isolation, but were part of large-scale social movements. Charles' generation broke away from the old world traditions of Judaism to find less constraining cultural identities in the melting pot. Cynthia's generation reinterpreted their ethnic heritages and embraced a multicultural ideal where each racial and ethnic group could celebrate itself. And I, the inheritor of their unmade traditions, will have to climb the mutation tree myself and aim for a more just and egalitarian variation on the culture I live in today. I hope this culture will have a place for people whose racial identities are multiple and compounded.

It's possible that multiculturalism could give birth to divisiveness, warfare, and separatism. Certainly, it's a system that has, at certain points, discouraged political and economic coalitions between racial groups; it can lead to a fetishization of difference to the point where any move to emphasize human commonalties seems like oppressive homogenization.

But the fact is that multiculturalism, in spite of its many draw-backs, does mean that people of different races are going to get thrown together more often. And they are going to fall in love, and fuck, and have children. Many people probably view me and my polyracial peers as mutants of the monstrous sort. Like Godzilla or something from *The X-Files*, we represent the end of all that was once called "civilization."

If that's true, then I welcome the end of civilization. I want to see race get weirder, harder to define, more and more like a cheesy movie rather than a melodrama. I look forward to a future when "miscegenation" is no longer possible, because it has become clear that everybody is already miscegenated. I hope my peers, and their children, will generate a new language and iconography to describe our current condition. Biracial, transracial, multiracial, polyracial, pseudo-racial, post-racial—maybe through our experiences these terms will acquire meaning.

I'd rather be a mutant than a separatist. @

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hen David Aragon was young, his family lived in the working-class Mexican and Italian Taylor Street neighborhood in Chicago, just west of downtown. Then the University of Illinois at Chicago was built, and Aragon's neighborhood was destroyed to make room for university buildings as well as upscale restaurants and apartments serving its students and faculty. His family took refuge in Pilsen, a neighborhood slightly further west and south, which had long been a haven for working-class immigrants and became largely Mexican in the '60s and '70s.

Today, Aragon is experiencing deja vú. His neighborhood is once again in mortal danger, with the university having decided the area is a perfect place for more student and faculty apartments and the city set on redeveloping the area by providing subsidies to developers marketing lofts to higher-income professionals. "They're pushing poor people out of the city and in the process breaking up the power bases of their struggle," he says. "It's gentrification, but you could also almost call it apartheid by both race and class."

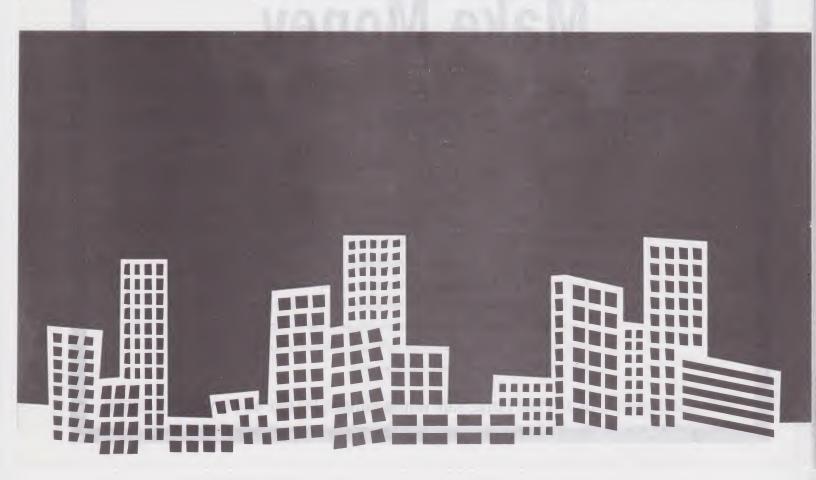
All over the country, the cycle of gentrification is displacing lower-income residents. In most American cities, as sociologist William Julius Wilson has argued, de-industrialization and the ascendancy of the information age have inverted traditional structures of urban life. With most factory jobs shipped abroad or lost to automation, professional white-collar jobs and low-paid service jobs with few benefits are taking their place. Meanwhile, white-collar workers eager for convenience and a happening neighborhood are flocking back to the central cities. The poor have very little political or economic defense against developers who want to buy up their crumbling apartments and rehab them into luxury condos and lofts, and city and state governments are only too pleased to ease the way for this transition. They do all they can to weaken rent-control laws, tear down public housing, and subsidize higher-level developers.

Many pessimistic community activists and urban scholars see only two possible eventual outcomes to the gentrification situation: either the market will become saturated and run out of people to fill expensive housing, or all the poor and the majority of non-white people will be driven out to far-flung neighborhoods and suburbs collaring the city—out of sight and out of mind. But other community leaders say it is possible to redevelop and improve a neighborhood without driving existing residents away. They are determined to hold on to at least a fraction of valuable land for the less fortunate. Through protests, lobbying, organizing, legal clinics, tenant buyouts and support from socially-conscious non-profit developers, activists have won some major victories against gentrification from New York to San Francisco.

But they can't totally prevent what amounts to the largest makeover of urban America in decades. For instance, San Francisco, long a refuge for all kinds of huddled masses, has lately become one of the least welcoming cities in America for neo-Bohemians and immigrant families. It has become almost completely gentrified, with only a few pockets of the city available to the poor and lower-income. A recent ranking found it to have the highest housing costs in the country.

Now, even those neighborhoods are on the verge of being obliterated. In the past three years, over I,000 low-cost housing units and 2,000 public housing units have been demolished and I,600 rental units went condo. Over 8,000 residents lost their homes through eviction—the majority forced to leave the city or to join its burgeoning homeless population, which is estimated at I0,000 and growing. Since 1995, dozens of local businesses have also been driven out, replaced by national chain stores.

San Francisco's mostly Latino Mission neighborhood has long been a mix of working-class and poor people, as well as young white bohemians. Spanish was the primary language spoken there. Now, as an activist describes it, the Mission is "the epicenter of trendy martini bars, high-priced restaurants and vintage clothing boutiques." It has suffered the city's highest number of evictions, with Latinos and seniors on fixed incomes hit especially hard. English has replaced Spanish as the neighborhood language, according to Ted Gullickson



of the San Francisco Tenants Union. A recent newspaper article stated that less than a third of the people who lived in the Mission in 1990 could afford the rent now.

New York faces a similar situation. Gentrification has made New York look less like a melting pot and more like a pot of oil and water, where people with varying wallet thicknesses never mix. "20 years ago, the Upper West Side was very mixed income," says Evan Hess of the Northern Manhattan Improvement Corporation. "On the same block you could have found a judge and the criminal who was facing him. You wouldn't see that today."

Low-income people fleeing New York won't find any relief in Boston, which has traditionally been another port of entry for immigrants. As in New York, Massachusetts lawmakers have attacked rent control in pursuit of development. "Landlords know what the business is like," says Carlos Rosales of the Massachusetts Tenants Organization in Boston. "They raise the rents so the people move to another community, then they raise the rents there. In some cases rents are increased 200 percent." In the previously affordable Jamaica Plain neighborhood, rents have increased over 20 percent-up to an average \$812 for a one-bedroom apartment—and housing prices have increased 40 percent over the past few years. Latinos and the elderly have been forced out in droves by these increases. "There's a huge increase in the number of white people and high-income people in the city," says Jamaica Plain activist Kathy Brown. "It's happening because the traditional residents are being forced out of the communities. It's wonderful to bring economic vitality to a neighborhood, but you need to keep the original residents there."

As in San Francisco, the natural beauty and cultural cache of Portland, Oregon make it a highly desirable place to live. It's also a place where non-affluent people are finding it less and less possible to live. Portland is second behind San Francisco in cost of housing this year. Rents in the previously affordable Northeast and Southeast neighborhoods are increasing 100 percent or more per year, accord-

ing to Dana Brown of the Portland-based Community Alliance of Tenants, the only tenants' organization in the state. The large African-American population of Portland's Eastern neighborhoods is quickly shrinking. They're being driven out to far-flung suburbs where Brown says the population of minorities has recently risen up to 200 percent. Rent control is outlawed by the state of Oregon, and evictions are snowballing in Portland, aided by a "no cause" eviction law where even the perfect tenant can be evicted if the landlord wants someone who can pay more.

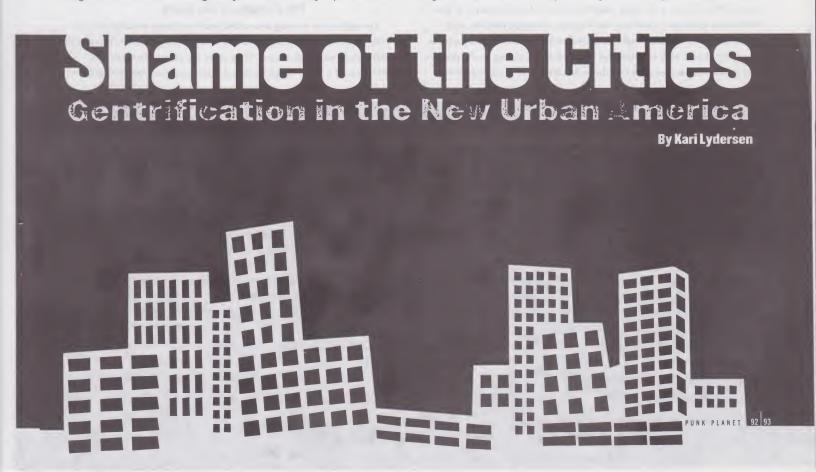
Neighboring Seattle has fared no better. John Fox of the Seattle Anti-Displacement Coalition says that the face of the city has been changed by huge subsidies for "big-ticket" development projects, the loss of affordable apartments and SROs and the destruction of public housing. Housing prices are so high that 35,000 of the city's 220,000 households are paying more than half their income toward rent—a ratio at which family is statistically considered "at risk for homelessness."

"In Seattle, almost every neighborhood has been gentrified and the [former residents] forced into the suburbs or crowded into pockets of poverty," Fox says. "We're following in the steps of San Francisco."

The Anatomy of a Gentrification

Gentrification has a long history. In the mid to late 1800s, powerbrokers in many European cities tried their hands at urban planning. In Paris, Baron Georges Eugene Haussmann, a court crony of Napoleon the Third's, gutted the residential areas where poor people lived throughout central Paris and installed the city's famous grand boulevards. Thousands of poor Parisians were displaced to make room for the sweeping tree-lined boulevards which showcased the city's famous monuments. Strict guidelines applied to new buildings along the boulevards, and the residences there became the most exclusive in the city.

Fast forward 100 years, when artists and bohemians started moving into American inner city buildings which had previously been



warehouses and factories and you can see the process start again.

Larry Bennett, a political science professor at Chicago's DePaul University, explains that even with the wave of artists moving into lofts in the '70s and '80s, it was still a stretch to sell these areas to yuppies. "Lofts are great for artists because they have all this room to put up canvases and paint till they're black and blue," he explains. "But back then the average person didn't want to live next to a factory or in a factory. To sell a loft to someone who wanted to put in vases and a quality kitchen was a bigger job."

This early gentrification didn't actually displace people, but it opened the way for the inner city to be viewed as a desirable place to live. It wouldn't be long before the residential neighborhoods right outside the city center were feeling the pressure. But even now, Bennett thinks displacement is not the most immediate effect of gentrification. Equally harmful, he says, is the diversion of resources from poor areas to neighboring wealthy areas. Especially with "urban

Low-income artists often unintentionally form the bridge from the original low-income community to the yuppies. They bring in galleries, cafes, rock clubs and a certain night life, which attracts the gentrifiers.

renewal" programs such as tax increment financing zones (TIFs—see sidebar) which allow tax dollars to be pooled from one neighborhood to another, allowing infrastructure, parks and schools in poor areas to be ignored in order to free up resources for rich neighborhoods.

"You know [Chicago Mayor Richard] Daley wants the affluent leotard-wearers in the Loop to send their kids to public schools," he said. "There's only so much tax revenue, and you know where it will go."

There are several essential elements necessary to create a gentrification situation, according to Nacho Gonzalez, a University of Illinois at Chicago professor who is working on a study on gentrification in West Town, a Chicago neighborhood. One element is a "gentrification industry"—realtors, developers, mortgage lenders, and construction companies eager to capitalize in the area. The second is a neighborhood with an attractive location and housing stock, preferably a disinvested area with run down but attractive architecture ripe

for rehabbing. The third necessity is a population of low-income people inhabiting the area with little political or economic power to fight for their territory. Closing the ring are people with disposable income looking to move into the area, usually young, childless professionals seeking location and action.

Low-income artists often unintentionally form the bridge from the original low-income community to the yuppies. "Artists like certain kinds of buildings, big spaces and lofts with stimulating architecture," said Gonzalez. "They bring in galleries, cafes, rock clubs and a certain night life, which attracts the gentrifiers."

Gonzalez says that at a certain point he thinks the loft and studio market will become saturated—"How many yuppies can there be?" he asks. Gonzalez also thinks the displacement that occurs with gentrification isn't a wholly unnatural process. With the deindustrialization of inner cities, many working-class people actually have jobs farther out in the suburbs and for that reason may leave their central neighborhoods anyway.

Gonzales believes that the elderly are the true victims of gentrification. They are quickly displaced when property values go up. Even if they own homes, their meager fixed incomes may prevent them from affording increased property taxes. Suddenly, they find themselves thrown into unfamiliar neighborhoods, cut off from their social support systems, and often far from medical facilities and shopping.

Larry Bennett notes that mayors and city officials eager for gentrification often seize on huge areas of inner-city property owned by railroads or manufacturing companies and buy it to let developers build fancy, often gated, planned developments. "[Unused inner-city land masses] are like manna from heaven for Daley or [New York Mayor Rudy] Giuliani," he says. "They can bring in that critical mass of upper-class people who will wear nice clothes and subscribe to the symphony and go to the theatre and the art museum. They want to Parisianize the downtowns."

The Changing of the Guard

Young people moving into cities look for cheap housing and are willing—sometimes even eager—to live in a gritty area with substandard housing stock and high crime. They crave the ethnic diversity and stimulation of a "real" neighborhood, and soon they have started and

Terrible TIFs: Legislated Gentrification

In theory, a Tax Increment Financing zone (TIF) sounds like an effective and clever way to revitalize a depressed area and invite new investment for the good of the residents. In reality, it is often just the opposite.

Started by a federal act in 1977, TIFs are used in 44 states and implemented and enforced differently by each state. A TIF is supposed to leverage tax dollars to create future increased revenue in an area. This is how it works: When an area is designated a TIF zone by the mayor and city council, the property tax dollars which go to public services (parks, schools, streets, etc.) in that area

are frozen at their current level for a designated period—different in each state—of up to 30 years.

The excess revenue that results with inflation and rising property values is all funneled into reinvestment, in the form of subsidies which the city gives to developers working in the area and other projects which "better the area." An area must be designated "blighted" for a TIF to be instated, and the logic goes that with the TIF subsidy incentive to developers, there will be so much new development that the neighborhood is no longer considered blighted. The improving property values generate more revenue, which goes back into devel-

opment, "improving" the area even more, and supposedly making things better for all concerned.

But according to several recent academic studies, as well as stories from people around the country, the horror stories about TIFs far outweigh the success stories. While TIFs have been used for projects which create jobs and improve the standard of living for masses of people—new industrial centers in Detroit and Peoria, Illinois; better marinas in Portland, Oregon; and improved affordable housing in California are some of the examples cited in the February 1994 issue of the journal *Governing*—more often than not, a TIF means wealthy residential and commercial developers get huge subsidies out of the taxpayers' pockets, at the expense of the schools, parks and city services for those very taxpayers. And

attracted galleries, clubs, cafes and vintage shops, forming a vibrant night life and cultural scene. Because they are largely from higher income backgrounds, are educated and mostly white, these pioneers make the area less threatening to the average higher-income yuppie.

Greenwich Village could be the case study for this phenomenon. In the '40s and '50s it was the cheap and seedy realm of the beatniks; today it costs over \$1200 a month to rent a one-bedroom apartment. Other New York neighborhoods have followed in the Village's tracks—Soho, and more recently, the lower East Side and Williamsburg.

In Chicago, the near north side neighborhood of Wicker Park has gentrified dramatically over the past five years after becoming the city's hot artist neighborhood. In the 1980s, Wicker Park was a Latino and Eastern European working-class neighborhood, whose past seediness was memorialized in the writing of Nelson Algren. It was filled with cheap Mexican restaurants, furniture stores and dollar stores. Prostitution and drug dealing were common.

Then a community of artists moved in to take advantage of the huge loft spaces and homey bars and diners. With this injection of new blood, Wicker Park blossomed with cafes, record stores, thrift shops and more. Gradually however, this slacker's paradise disappeared. Urbis Orbis, a spacious cafe which was popular with the early artists and writers, was recently priced out when it could no longer afford its rent. The Flat Iron building at the corner of North, Milwaukee and Damen, once a bohemian refuge where artists could slide by rent-free for months, was taken over by corporate realtors who systematically harassed their tenants and jacked their rents up with no notice, hoping to clear the building for wealthier renters. Today, the three-flats on the tree-lined side streets of Wicker Park sell for \$500,000. Chic restaurants with \$24 meals and glitzy night clubs with \$10 cover charges line the main drags.

Dana Brown mentions a North Portland area called Alberta Street which "used to be very depressed, mainly boarded up buildings and lots of prostitution and drug deals. Now it's chez Alberta, with lofts and bistros." She notes that the area, in the early stages of the "hipness" transition, is still pleasantly diverse, with lots of gay, lesbian and African-American-owned businesses. "But still," Brown says, "The original residents aren't part of it."

The Jamaica Plain neighborhood in Boston is another example.

Until a few years ago, it was one of the few integrated and open-minded neighborhoods in the city, but now rising property values are turning it into another yuppie haven. "Boston's always been pretty segregated, but Jamaica Plain has always been the funky, diverse, cool place," said Kathy Brown of City Life/Vida Urbana, a local community and activist group. "But if something isn't done soon, it won't be too funky or diverse anymore. The politicians are supposed to be progressive, but they should put their politics into their real estate practices."

She says it's common not to have a year-long lease in Jamaica Plain, so many residents are getting "outrageous" rent increases month by month. In a way, many of them are victims of their own hard work and organization. "In the late '80s we did a lot of work to stabilize the neighborhood, getting banks to come in, fighting crime, promoting homeownership. Now it's a really great area, but the people who made it that way are getting pushed out."

Public Housing

In many cities, decrepit public housing projects stand on some of the most valuable land. In other areas, project-based Section 8 (scattered site public housing) units are earmarked for low-income residents, but landlords are realizing they could be getting astronomically higher rents for these structures. Thanks to original ill-conceived plans and shameful maintenance, much public housing is now virtually unlivable. As a result, federal and state agencies are removing large public housing projects in every major city. The majority of residents are given Section 8 vouchers and sent into the open market to find an affordable apartment. Yet the federal government has also passed legislation that spells the near-total dismantling of projectbased Section 8 housing. Developers previously got low-interest mortgages to build apartments for Section 8 housing, with the tenants paying a third of their income toward rent and the government picking up the slack. But recently, landlords have been allowed to buy out their 40-year mortgages early, get rid of Section 8 tenants, and raise the rents to fit the market. If they don't do this, there are always other means they can use.

"We're afraid that local HUD offices will start enforcing quality standards on Section 8 buildings real strictly in valuable areas," said Mike Foley of the Cleveland Tenants Union. "The buildings won't be

the TIF incentive money is often so tempting that not only does the area stop being "blighted," but the residents are displaced by rising property taxes and rents. The city also has eminent domain in a TIF zone, meaning that "for the good of the area" it can seize any parcel of land it pleases and kick the owner off. To make matters worse for these homeowners, the county assessor determines how much the displaced owner will receive, leading many homeowners and small business owners to complain that they didn't even get a fair market price for their land.

Money can also be funneled between contiguous TIFs, meaning that taxpayers are paying for development in a different part of the city. And given the length of TIFs, many areas remain TIFed long after they have become some of the

ritziest areas of the city. Tax money can even be relayed through any number of contiguous TIFs. Theoretically, poor people in one truly blighted zone could be losing out on local school and park money while paying subsidies to a rich developer miles away in the wealthiest part of the city.

This is a worst case scenario dependent on the varying amount of checks and balances and community input required by the state. Some states, including California, Nebraska, Kansas, Wisconsin and New Mexico have provisions for affordable housing and school protection written into their TIF law. But in the majority of states, cities have virtual free reign to do what they like with TIFs.

Community groups all over the country are fighting proposed TIFs because of the gentrifying

effects they have witnessed. In 1994, Latinos from the Chicago suburb of Addison filed a class action suit against the city, saying a TIF had a racist gentrifying effect on the area. After the U.S. Justice Department itself pressed charges, the city settled for an eye-opening \$4.3 million, one of the largest awards ever in a housing discrimination case.

The use of the term "blighted" is also a hot issue in TIF battles. With no official definition of "blighted" written into TIF law, city officials can declare almost any neighborhood blighted. In studies for the Addison TIF, one report justifies calling the area blighted because there was "dust on the window sills, missing toilet paper roll holders...and unwashed dishes in kitchen sinks."

---Kari Lyderson

up to code, so they'll lose the Section 8 and they'll be demolished or rehabbed for market rate housing."

People displaced from public housing and Section 8 will add even more strain to the already tight affordable-housing markets. And their displacement from gentrifiable areas will doubly help the gentrifiers. Not only have Section 8 and public-housing units been cleared for market rate units, but the removal of the "undesirable" poor residents will instantly make the neighborhood "better" and more attractive to wealthy residents.

The racial element of the dismantling of public housing is impossible to ignore. Public housing activists charge that with the vast majority of public housing residents being black and Latino, their high concentration in valuable areas is too much for city officials and developers to bear. As public housing disappears, these minority residents are scattered.

Rent Control Attacked

Where it's existed, rent control has long been one of the best friends of a low-income tenant. Preventing the landlord from increasing rent past a small cost-of-living increase each year, rent control allows low-income people—especially the elderly and disabled and others on fixed incomes—to stay in the same apartment for years no matter how ritzy the surrounding neighborhood becomes.

Landlords and developers hate rent control for obvious reasons, as it forces them to keep renting apartments for literally as little as one fifth what they could get for them. Rent control (and rent stabilization laws) have suffered some vicious setbacks in the past few years. In

Boston, rent control was ended in a state referendum four years ago. Even though rent control only existed in three Massachusetts cities, Boston, Cambridge and Brookline, real estate interests pushed law-makers to put anti-rent control legislation on a state bill after it failed to pass on the city level.

"The real estate industry spent over a million dollars to get it passed," explains Kathy Brown. "Now there's no protection on rents. Landlords are doing whatever they want to do."

Brown notes that a lot of elderly people, formerly protected by rent control, have been forced out of the Fenway Park neighborhood as more students and young people move into the trendy area surrounding the famous ballpark. Boston's rent control was phased out by income level over the past years, with the final phases basically complete now.

"The last two years have been terrible," says Rosales. "We've seen a lot of people forced out, especially seniors who'd been living in the same building for years. People can't afford rents and don't have anywhere to go but the shelters. There are a lot more homeless people."

New York has also substantially weakened rent control by releasing vacated apartments from the agreement. This perversely gives landlords extreme personal motivation to evict people, because once an eviction causes a vacancy, they can raise the rent at will. Several legal aid and community groups in Boston and New York say they have seen massive increases in evictions already. Hess notes that the changes in rent control also take away the judge's discretion in postponing an eviction to give the tenant an opportunity to get emergency aid. Welfare emergency aid for rent has been made much harder to get with welfare reform.

Dudley Street:A Model of Development without Displacement

For the last few years, the residents of Boston's Dudley Street neighborhood have been feeling like celebrities. They have been featured on the cover of *The Nation* as well as in countless *Boston Globe* stories, and neighborhood organizers and activists all around the country are speaking their names. They are even the stars of a documentary, *Holding Ground: The Rebirth of Dudley Street*, which is being shown in universities, town halls and newsrooms across the country. The Dudley Street Neighborhood Initiative (DSNI) office gets so many calls that staffers have only a few minutes to spend with each caller and beg them instead to go to the Web page and extensive literature which show how Dudley Street came to pass.

Dudley Street residents, organized through the DSNI, have reclaimed their community from extreme disinvestment, contamination, deterioration, crime and every other conceivable type of urban blight, and have turned it into a vibrant, friendly and truly affordable place to live. They have created gardens, youth programs, plentiful quality affordable housing, public art, educational and training services and a thriving local economy—all without gentrification or displacement.

The key? Impressive community cohesion and involvement in every facet of the development process; a holistic vision focusing on social and cultural as well as economic factors; and a series of small, doable goals leading to larger victories. The Dudley Street neighborhood straddles the Roxbury and North Dorchester neighborhoods south of downtown Boston. It is one of the city's poorest neighborhoods, with an average family income of \$20,848 and an unemployment rate of 16 percent.

About 32 percent of Dudley Street residents fall below the poverty line, and average per capita income is \$7,600, compared to \$16,000 for Boston as a whole. It is also one of the most ethnically diverse neighborhoods in the city, with 37 percent African-Americans, 29 percent Latinos, 25 percent Cape Verdeans and 7 percent white (mainly older Polish and Eastern European) resi-

dents. DSNI meetings and literature are translated into Spanish and Cape Verdean, and the ethnic diversity is proportionately represented on the DSNI Board of Directors.

Dudley Street has about 1,300 vacant parcels of land in its 30 block area—"a piecemeal urban wilderness" is how The *Christian Science Monitor* described it in a June 21, 1994 story. Going back to the early '80s, Dudley Street vacant lots formed a patchwork quilt over the neighborhood due to drastic disinvestment. As crime rose and property values plummeted, landlords torched their buildings right and left for the insurance money, injuring and killing people in the process. Drug dealing, prostitution and rampant illegal dumping of trash and toxic waste took the place of businesses and houses in the vacant lots.

In 1984, DSNI was formed by residents fed up with the deterioration and danger in their community. It was initially funded largely by the Riley Foundation, a small Boston-based trust. The foundation originally planned to institute its own programs, but residents, many who had been gentrified out of the South End neighborhood in the '70s by similar programs, were wary of this outside involvement. The Riley Foundation took the unusual step of offering its

"All these laws are dovetailing," says Hess, referring to the attacks on rent control and welfare reform. "What it will mean is more people on the street."

Kathleen Crowe of the Tenants Union of the West Side in New York says she thinks rent control and other tenant-rights issues are basically doomed, since tenants don't have the lobbying power to compete with developers and rich landlords. "The governor and his gang want to end all rent control," she says. "The landlords fill their pockets with a lot of nice money. Housing court keeps getting less and less tenant-oriented. They're definitely on the landlord's side."

San Francisco also has no protection on vacant apartments, so once a unit is vacated the rent can be raised 300 percent or more before the

Several legal aid and community groups in Boston and New York saythey have seen massive increases in evictions already.

new rent control kicks in. Landlords have found plenty of creative ways to remove tenants so they can raise the rent or go condo. One popular tactic is fake "owner-move-ins," where a landlord is allowed to evict a tenant so that he can move into the unit, only to move in and move right out, raise the rent or convert the unit into a condo. Gullickson said "owner-move-ins" have increased by 300 percent since 1996.

"The landlords are trying to get rid of the low and moderate income tenants so they can be replaced by tenants who are able to pay outrageously high rents," said Gullickson, noting that a two-bedroom apartment going for \$800 a month 10 years ago would easily go for \$2,000 now.

Eshelman says that San Francisco's purportedly progressive Mayor Willie Brown has been no help to tenants in the face of these shenanigans. "He has done nothing and has been the major force steamrolling the poor in San Francisco."

Fighting Back: Development Without Displacement

The machinations of city government around development and gentrification depend on uninformed residents and tenant complacency. In Chicago, meetings and community hearings having to do with gentrification issues are planned in order to keep community involvement to a minimum. Local aldermen usually schedule "community meetings" at which they extol pro-gentrification plans and even plant supporters in the audience to give the appearance of community support. They attempt to squelch any actual grassroots input into city plans, changing the dates of public meetings without notice and doing whatever else they can to clip their opponents' wings.

But every major city has at least one non-profit group fighting for housing rights—many cities have a whole list of such organizations, including many all-volunteer, entirely-grassroots ones. Gentrification is a major issue for all of them. In addition, among the heated community meetings addressing gentrification across the country, scattered voices are heard decrying the hard-liners who want no development and no chance of gentrification whatsoever.

Community groups in Boston and New York were able to soften rent control cuts with provisions for the elderly and other minor anti-gentrification measures. The City Life/Vida Urbana group even organized a committee of landlords who support

financial support while ceding power to the residents, and DSNI was formed. Within months, the organization scored an unprecedented victory by gaining the power of eminent domain over the vacant lots, a power usually reserved for the city or public institutions such as universities. In fact, DSNI remains the only group of its kind to win the power of eminent domain. The DSNI grew into a massive grassroots organization of resi-24,000 residents in the community). They secured funding from private foundations and city, state and federal grants, and proceeded to start a barrage of programs and initiatives aimed at every facet of public life. The massive community involvement and a concerted plan to keep things local and community-based has kept gentrification at bay.

Far from the rising property values seen in most improving neighborhoods, DSNI has an impressive affordable housing project in which families making as little as \$15,000 a year can buy brand new quality homes. Phase I of the resident-developed housing plan, completed in 1995, involved the creation of 77 units of lowincome housing. Phase II and III will bring close to 100 more units, and phase IV will include 130

residential units and 30 to 60 commercial units. Through grants from HUD and private foundations and developers, the houses are being sold for as little as 3/5s of what it cost to build them (for example, \$150,000 houses selling for \$90,000 in the Winthrop Estates development).

Dudley Street residents have seen the alienating and gentrifying effect large chain stores have had on other communities. So for the in-the-works commercial center of the Urban Village, chain stores, check-cashing outlets, manufacturing plants and the like have been turned down. Only local, community-oriented businesses will be allowed. A local currency and barter network are being developed, keeping much-needed investment in the community. Business owners are in step with these goals: in 1997, 118 businesses signed on to a campaign called The Buck Stops Here, aimed at keeping local dollars in the neighborhood.

The massive contamination from years of illegal dumping and unenforcement of city health and building codes is being combated by neighborhood clean-up programs which have won accolades from the state and federal EPA. An Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) campaign has been instituted to help people take advantage of this federal relief for low-income people, and a

community center with ESL classes, athletics and social services is being completed. Guerrilla gardens sporting rows of corn, fruit and vegetables decorate many of the vacant lots. The Dudley Village Players perform street theater relating to community issues and resident empowerment. And among the many leadership, educational and cultural programs of the DSNI, the Nubian Roots program trains youth to continue the tradition of community empowerment on Dudley Street.

Though their vision is community-centered, based on providing for the people of Dudley Street, the residents are also focused on reaching out and helping other communities follow in their footsteps. They distribute resources and maintain a Web page to help groups around the country learn from their experiences, and in Boston they have been on the frontlines of battles involving other communities. They have protested the red-lining practices of Boston banks and held classes for low-income people looking to rehab or buy buildings.

What happened on Dudley Street shouldn't be that unusual. It is the hope and goal of thousands of poor urban neighborhoods around the world, but so far it is hard to find another community which has realized the ideal as well as Dudley Street.
—Kari Lyderson

affordable housing and oppose gentrification. The Anti-Displacement Project in Springfield, MA has also been successful in passing pro-tenant legislation. One demonstration included 40 low-income residents surrounding a pro-gentrification city hall official with squeaky rubber rats and proclaiming him the "Dirty Rat of the Year."

In Chicago, the Organization of the North East has served as a national model for its work in the Uptown area. Uptown, which studies have shown to be one of the most economically and racially diverse neighborhoods in the country, has long been at risk of gentrification because of its beautiful lakefront location. But largely due to the efforts of ONE, it continues to be one of the city's more affordable. In fact, according to spokesperson James Mumm, ONE has played a direct role in the maintenance of over 4,300 affordable units in Uptown and the nearby Edgewater

People shouldn't be asked to forfeit quality housing and vibrant businesses out of fear of gentrification

neighborhood. These units include II Section 8 buildings, four of which are members of ONE, and the organization's Lakefront SRO, Harper House and Voice of the People, all of which are ONE members.

One of ONE's strategies is tenant buyouts, particularly in cases where a landlord is opting out of a government-subsidized mortgage for Section 8 affordable housing. In the early '90s, ONE orchestrated the first tenant buyout in the country, when low-income residents took over the Carmen Marine apartment building. They have successfully organized tenant buyouts at numerous other buildings which otherwise would probably have gone condo.

Like many successful community groups, ONE is a powerful force in the housing market largely because its scope extends well beyond housing. "We obtain property [through buyouts] which will then remain secure for affordable housing," explains ONE organizer Chris Pope. "Then those anchor the community. We work building to building, keeping them from being sold to someone who will throw everyone out. We're working on a lot by lot survey so we have a sense of what's happening and we know what will be targeted next."

Joy Aruguete of the Bickerdike Redevelopment Corporation, a Chicago non-profit responsible for creating hundreds of units of secure affordable housing in Pilsen, said the company has sometimes been called "the original gentrifier" and blamed for paving the way for gentrification in the neighborhoods in which they work. But Arguete is quick to point out that people shouldn't be asked to forfeit quality housing and vibrant businesses out of fear of gentrification, and that generally people understand it can be possible to develop a neighborhood without displacement.

"As a community developer, we're clear that we want our units to go to people who already live in the community," she explains. "That's part of our mission. When the gentrification issue is framed for political purposes and people don't look at the complexity of it, that hurts everyone."

Virginia Pace of the Holsten Development Corporation in Chicago said that even for-profit companies aren't always on a mission to gentrify. She says that her company is "very neighborhood based" and has focused on providing affordable housing for over 25 years. The residents of the Cabrini-Green public housing project in Chicago seem to recognize this: with Cabrini slated for transformation into a controversial "mixed-income community," they chose Holsten as their favored private developer.

"Because we deal with affordable housing, we're not displacing people," said Pace, the vice president of development. "You do have to make money, but there are ways to do it without displacing people. With low-income housing, the returns are smaller than with market rate, but the risks are also more long-term and you have tax credits."

In Chicago's Pilsen, the gentrification battle has been frustrating, but opponents have enjoyed relative success. The city has been trying it gentrify Pilsen for decades, and so far every major initiative has been beaten down through community pressure. Also, despite noticeable changes in the past five years, Chicago's West Town, also can boast some triumphs.

The West Town Tenants' United organization has a campaign to help low-income homeowners protest increases in their property taxes. In February, the campaign filed 130 complaints with the assessor's office, and in every single instance the taxes were subsequently lowered.

"I'm very proud to say it's my neighborhood and I want it to be my kids' neighborhood too," says Ana Gonzalez, a West Town activist and 25-year resident. "Everywhere I look they're building something new, but what good is that if we aren't here to take advantage of it? This is my neighborhood and I'm here to stay."



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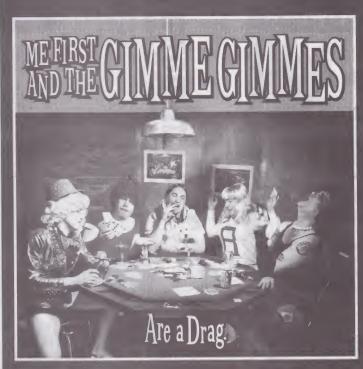
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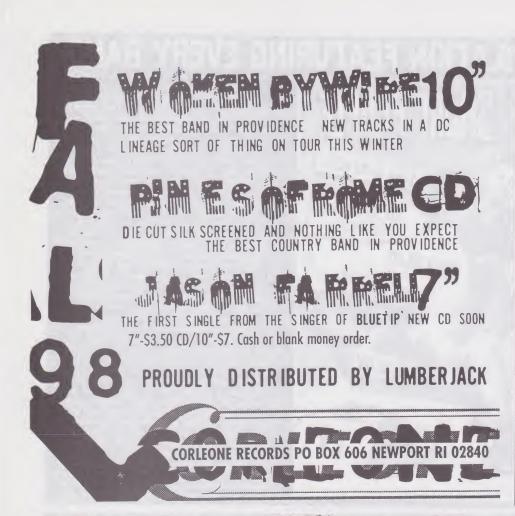
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I Remember by Kari Blank

I remember

Ir.e.m..

Remember...

Near the end of the year in my crumbling high school we sat segregated by class in the gymnasium waiting to have our pictures taken.

I had joined no clubs and sat on one of the lower bleachers, laughing with my friends and occasionally I would stare into the milky sunlight coming through the huge, cracked windows. I am sure there were times when I pictured myself almost angelic, looking into that precarious light and smiling.

I was clutching my journal, a black bound spiral notebook-I'm assuming that it was the one I had started in December of the year before. M -- was sitting beside me, laughing and trying to wrench it from my hands; I watched some of the tiny square

paper edges fall and land on the thick blue lacquer of the bleachers. I laughed with my knees pressed to my forehead, the notebook clutched against my stomach and M--'s arms reaching in to get at it.

E--, then a senior came to sit with us for awhile. I associate that visitation with his dirty white Converse, the dust gathered almost opaque on the floor, and he lifting up his shirt to reveal the triangle tag on the back pocket of his jeans.

"Only the best second hand as to offer"he had said these words one day as we were sitting in our history class, showing me the glossy inside of his coat which had London Fog embroidered onto it.

That was the year I wrote terrible Gothic poetry, every word brooding and dripping blood.

He talked to me of music that almost

seemed pagan it was so foreign.

We all laughed at the joke of E -- having Guess jeans. This bit of cultural trivia will pass forgotten soon enough. The amazing proliferation and consumption of \$60 jeans with that absurd inverted triangle on the ass. It was against absurdities such as that which we rebelled. It seemed a wonderful joke on American consumerism that he had purchased those jeans second hand for less than \$10.

Eventually, E -- moved over to S -- and I could see the way he was drawing her in. The only thing I ever really hated about him was the way he treated women. I knew by S--'s unspoken language, her hands and feet, that she was going to go home with him.

Empty houses in this town have a certain charm. You can stand in the kitchen and study the beaten Orange Crush bottle opener

mounted on the wall. And failing that, you can simply watch the orange rushes of leaves.

She was virginal then, untouched by male obstruction. I told her that I thought she was a fool; perhaps I was being melodramatic. Sex is a natural progression; sex can be a tool and a meditation; sex can be a short route to God if you believe in that sort of thing.

(I mentioned R.E.M. in the second line of this narrative. R.E.M. is a band formed in the early 1980s by four college boys in Athens, Georgia. From what I understand, Athens is very similar to my very own Johnson City, Tennessee—a large college town full of old buildings and houses and history and practically nothing to do. The lead singer, Michael Stipe, was in those early days a shy introvert. He was accompanied always by his two sisters, rarely speaking. He has since

become a shining portrait, a picture of glamour with shaven head and sunken cheeks.)

S—told me later of the way he had kissed her, holding her by her hips and lifting her onto the kitchen counter. I imagine him giving her stabbing, intrusive kisses startling to her virginal form.

"Orange Crush" was the first song by R.E.M. that truly galvanized me; that left me unable to speak with feeling. Every summer I listen to the records and CDs. This music helps usher in the green of summer after the half-hearted budding of spring. It helps me to remember things that I wasn't even present for.

She told me of how in their clumsy attempt at sex, she had bled so badly that E—became scared and pulled away. He offered to let her take a shower but she declined. Once

she had pulled her clothes back on, he took her home, genuinely scared and apologetic. A couple of years later she would tell me that pieces of herself had gotten on his hands, on his bed, the floor—black bits like leeches sticking to her legs. She would show me that black dress, never cleaned, the spots of blood barely visible on it. I rubbed these rough spots in wonder and a flare of true hate grew in me for E—-.

"The One I Love"

She has a hundred homemade candles in her room. They have been there for years. They are of every color; they are dust covered and chaotic from wax that has melted, ran and then dried. When I go into her room now, those candles will not remind me of her encounter with E—-. They will remind me of my own clumsy encounters with her.

Interpunk

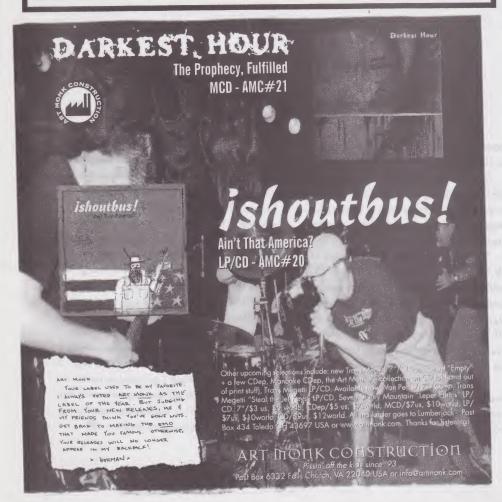
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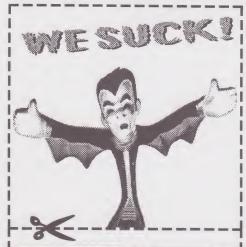


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the DIY files

DIY Screenwriting

By Jim Munroe

I'll fess up: I've only written one feature-length screenplay—how many have you written? Exactly. I have, however, written a novel, some articles and a lot of other stuff, so I figured this screenwriting thing couldn't be all that hard. And you know what? It wasn't. But because I don't have a library of screenplays being shopped around Hollywood or anything, I'm not willing to feign a general expertise in the area. As such, this article isn't a "What-You-Need" but rather "What-I-Found-Helpful-To-Have."

Keep in mind that this is DIY screenwriting, not moviemaking. I wrote a script because I wanted to write a script, not because I wanted to make it into a movie myself. I wanted to sell it to someone who wanted to make it into a movie (and I'm trying to do that right now). If you want to shoot your script, more power to you. But you'll still have to write it and these tips for the most part will still be things you'll need.

1) AN IDEA Have a good idea for a story or characters bubbling in your skull for a little while, preferably something that interests you deeply. Something that suits the visual medium. Really think it all through before you sit down to write; you'll save a lot of time and frustration.

One thing to keep in mind: If you hope to sell your script, consider the exploitability factor. Any script can be fucked up and inverted, but some scripts are more susceptible to it than others. For example, you won't be doing the casting or the wardrobe for that riot grrrl character you wrote, and suddenly, if you haven't written her character strongly enough, she could be pimping the latest in skin care products when she's supposed to stand against that sort of thing.

If that makes you wince, ask yourself: Why am I writing a script? Why aren't you writing a novel you could publish yourself or an album you could record? Those are both creative projects that you can actually see into the world without having to filter your original vision through a gazillion people—which movies (except of the most shoestring, no-budget variety) almost always require. It actually increases your chances of following through and completing the script if you have a good answer for this question—I'm not just being an asshole.

2) A WEEK The magic ratio in scriptwriting is one page equals one minute. What that means is that a 90 minute film equals a 90 page script. You can easily write 90 pages in a week or two, so why not do it like that?

A much bigger problem than the actual writing of the thing is maintaining your will to do so in the face of self-doubt, worries about how to get it made, and various personal calamities. "So, are you still working on that screenplay?" is not the question you want to be hearing month after month after year. Your script stands a better chance of being done if you can just set aside a week or two to write the first draft—we did it in five days, with one day to edit.

3) A PARTNER Did I just say "we" up there? Yes I did. With the aforementioned difficulties with writing a screenplay, it helps to have back-up. Find someone with similar tastes in movies and books who you also have fun with. F.U.N. is K.E.Y. (you'll understand what the acronym stands for after you've finished your first screenplay.) Remember, you want to transform this from a chore into an enjoyable experience.

4) OUR PATENTED METHOD The Slutsky-Munroe method, perhaps peculiar to us, was as follows:

A quota was set up (total pages needed / days allotted-pages per day). One person types while the other paces, reading over the shoulder and laughing or simply saying "nice" as merited.

We often found ourselves typing dialogue that had the characters saying smutty and incongruous things. We found that while most of it was quickly deleted, some of this off-the cuff stuff was kept or, more importantly, inspired new tangents.

If you're not sure what happens next, say "Imagine if..." and "How about..." and "What do you think..." back and forth to each other until you find something that sends you back to the keyboard in a rush.

5) THE BELL Does anything say "Hollywood" like a smartly rung hotel bell? No siree! I wasn't sure what we needed it for, but I brought one anyway. Its primary use was to signal the end of a scene, but that was only the beginning. Alternately, it was rung for product placements (a quick double ring to simulate a cash register's ca-ching!) or simply to divert mischievous energies (better to "accidentally" ring the bell than "accidentally" pour coffee in your partner's lap—take it from someone who knows).

6) AN AUDIENCE Beyond your partner, it helps to have a reader in mind, a person whose opinion you respect. Tell this person when you'll be giving them the script—this gives you an extra incentive to get it done.

At the same time, however, you don't want to write this script specifically for this one person. It helps to refer to this person not by their real, serious sounding name but to a silly but almost-believable name. When I was telling my partner about a potential reader months before the collaboration, he said the fateful words: "So this Lemon guy, he'll want to look at it?" Neither he nor I could figure out why he chose this word, although he may have been drinking a glass of water with a slice of said fruit at the time. "Lemon" it was.

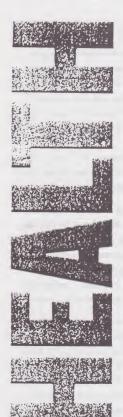
Unfortunately, we were unable to stop there. Perhaps taking the partnership to an extreme, we submerged our own identities: we took to calling each other "Dude." Although it's impossible to fully justify it, it did allow us to add a note of levity to potentially ego-bruising suggestions: "But Dude, we can't make him [the character] too arrogant," or "Dude, everyone will totally think that plot twist is totally lame," or the harrowing-but-necessary "Dude, time for you to take a walk."

7) A FEW SCRIPTS You definitely want to get your hands on a few scripts before you sit down and write your own. There is all kinds of text formatting as well as some pretty wild margins that you need to know about. I had never read a script all the way through at the time, and half-way through we realized we had been using the wrong format—the margins were considerably narrower and so we ended up having done much more than our quota. Cries of "Dude, Lemon will know! Lemon will totally know we're idiots!" were heard echoing down the Montreal streets until we fixed it. If you're a writer, you don't need any special training to do it—just read a few till you feel that you can fake it convincingly. Then go to it.

But remember the bell—the bell is K.E.Y. @

Jim Munroe's dream is to destroy the concept of the professional. His novel, Flyboy Action Figure Comes With Gasmask, comes out this November with Avon. For agit-prop and hype visit www.yip.org/jim

in sickness and no wealt



tress. We all know it, feel it, and deal with it on a daily basis. In fact, this column was a little stressful for me. I kept asking myself, "Will people want to read this? Is it clear? Am I providing enough information? Will I be able to handle any criticism that comes along?" So I had a bottle of good beer, polished off a box of Girl Scout cookies, and listened to Joan Jett & The Blackhearts. Now that I'm relaxed, I can try to put aside my worries and do my best to cover this subject for you.

If you have never experienced stress, you're either inhuman or you have the secret to life, (and you need to contact me immediately with details). We will never have a way to delete all the stress in our lives, but we do have the power to minimize it and take care of our bodies.

There are many ways to minimize and deal with stress, such as aromatherapy, meditation, yoga, and counseling. But my focus in this article will only be on what kinds of supplements and herbs we can take to relax our mind and body. And NO, I'm not talking about pot.

PLEASE NOTE: I am not a Doctor or Licensed Herbalist, so please use the information provided at your own risk.

Stress: What is it?

My bible for alternative medicine, Prescription for Nutritional Healing, tells us that "Stress can cause fatigue, chronic headaches, irritability, changes in appetite, memory loss, low self esteem, withdrawal, toothgrinding, cold hands, high blood pressure, shallow breathing, nervous twitches, lowered sexual drive, insomnia or other changes in sleep patterns, and/or gastrointestinal disorders. Stress creates an excellent breeding ground for illness. Researchers estimate that stress contributes to as many as 80% of all major illness, including cardiovascular disease, cancer, endocrine and metabolic disease, skin disorders, and infectious ailments of all kinds. Stress also promotes the formation of free radicals that become oxidized and damage body tissue."

Immune Boosting

Now that you know what stress is, how do you deal with it? Well, the first thing I do

when my stress levels are at their peak is increase my dosage of Vitamin C. I take 4,000 mg a day in divided doses (you can safely take Vitamin C up until you have diarrhea, then cut back 1000 mg and that will be your own personal dosage. Dosages range between 3,000-10,000 mg).

I'm also prone to stress-related canker sores, so I rinse my mouth twice daily with a mixture of I/2 peroxide and I/2 water to minimize and/or heal any canker sores. If I start right away I usually can head them off.

Then I build up my immune system in order to protect against illness. You can take immune boosting herbs right before exam week, starting a new job, traveling—you fill in the blank. Take them before, during and after the stressful activity. You may only need to take it for a couple of days or a couple of months, depending on your situation. There are five excellent herbs that you can take individually or together depending on how much cash you have: Astragulus (should not be taken in the presence of a fever), Echinacea (should not be used by those who are allergic to plants in the sunflower family), Goldenseal (should not be used for prolonged periods or during pregnancy and should only be used under supervision by those with cardiovascular disease, diabetes, or glaucoma), Ginseng (should not be used by those with hypoglycemia, high blood pressure or heart disease), and Garlic.

If you buy these herbs already pre-packaged, follow as directed. However, if you are buying herbs in bulk (the cheaper alternative), use the following for a guideline in figuring out your dosage. When using a tea, take 3-4 cups daily for the duration of your stressor. If using a tincture, take I/2-I tsp three times daily. If you want to take capsules, take two "OO" capsules three times daily. If you're vegan or vegetarian make sure you're buying capsules that are gelatin-free.

I also like to use Bee Pollen (which is not vegan). It strengthens the immune system by acting as a antiviral and antibiotic, plus gives you a boost of extra energy. However, some people may be allergic to Bee Pollen. It is best to try taking a small amount at first and watch for a developing rash, wheezing, discomfort, or any other signs of a reaction. If such symptoms occur, discontinue taking it.

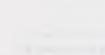
It is very important that you pick out quality herbs. To make things simple, look for "organic", "wildcrafted" or, in the case of Goldenseal, "cultivated" written on the packaging. This insures quality herbs, without the use of pesticides.

NOTE: If you are nursing or pregnant, do not use any herbs or supplements without supervision from your herbalist, midwife or doctor.

Herbs

Now that you've done all that, the following herbs can be taken to calm your nerves, so you can "unwind". Only use these herbs when needed—don't take them constantly. For example: If you suffer from insomnia, don't take large doses every single night, as you may have a sleeping disorder and you need to see a doctor. However, if you know that your insomnia is stress induced, then by all means use any of the herbs listed below for those few restless nights you are having.

If you are buying your herbs in bulk, use the following guideline for dosages. For tea, take I/4 cup every I/2-I hours until symptoms





Dealing with Stress by Angel Page

subside. If using tinctures, take I/4-I tsp. every I/2-I hours. Or, if using capsules, take I-2 capsules every 3-4 hours. If you are buying pre-packaged herbs, please follow as directed.

- I. Bilberry a.k.a. blueberry (Vaccinium Myrtillus). This herb is good for stress and anxiety. But Bilberry interferes with iron absorption when taken internally. Iron is required for a healthy immune system and for energy production. In order to make sure you're getting enough Iron, I suggest taking Traditional Medicinals "Iron Woman" tea (which is also beneficial for men too), three cups a day, if you are going to take Bilberry. This is not necessary, but beneficial.
- 2. Catnip a.k.a. catmint, catnep, field balm, or catswort (Nepeta Cataria). Grow some for you and your cat! It's used for stress and anxiety.
- 3. Chamomile (Matricaria Chamomilla). Chamomile is a traditional remedy for stress and anxiety, indigestion, and insomnia. Chamomile should not be used for long periods of time, as this might lead to ragweed allergy. Those of you who are allergic to Ragweed should avoid this herb altogether.
- 4. Hops (Humulus Lupulus). One of the best herbs for inducing sleep.
- 5. Kava Kava (Piper Methysticum). Kava Kava is a favorite of mine, it really helps to take the edge off. Make sure not to take too much of this stuff, as it can really make you drowsy. Do not exceed dosage or abuse this every day—you can develop a skin rash. If this happens, stop taking it immediately, and it should go away very quickly!
- **6. Lavender** (Lavendula Vera or L. Officinalis). I'm not sure which is more relaxing for me: the smell of Lavender or growing it. Both activities are good nerve tonics. Lavender is a must in aromatherapy, plus it's great if you take it internally with other herbs. For headaches, Lavender should be combined with Lemon Balm and Skullcap. For muscle spasms and cramps, it works wonders when combined with Valerian. For depression, Lavender should be mixed with Borage flowers.
- 7. Mullein a.k.a. candlewick, flannel-flower, or great mullein (Verbascum Thapsus). This flower tea will help to induce sleep.
- 8. Passion Flower a.k.a. maypop, or purple passion flower (Passiflora Incarnata). Passion Flower is most commonly used for nervous conditions such as insomnia, restlessness, hysteria, and nervous headache. Passion Flower should not be used in high doses during pregnancy.
- 9. Skullcap a.k.a. blue skullcap, blue pimpernel, or flowering skullcap (Scutellaria Lateriflora). Skullcap is good for nervous conditions, such as excitability, insomnia, and general restlessness.
- 10. Squaw vine a.k.a. partridgeberry (Mitchella Repens). Squaw vine is great at relieving insomnia.
- II. Suma a.k.a. Brazilian Ginseng, or para toda (Pfaffia Paniculata). Suma helps adapt the body to external stress, relieve pain, fight chronic fatigue syndrome, and also has a boosting effect in the body. To date there are no reports regarding the toxicity and there are no known side effects.

- 12. Wormwood a.k.a. absinthe (Artemisia absinthium). Wormwood acts as a mild sedative. IMPORTANT: Wormwood should not be used during pregnancy, as it can cause spontaneous abortion.
- 13. Lemon Balm a.k.a. bee balm, balm, or melissa (Melissa Officinalis). Lemon Balm is useful for all sorts of nervous problems, hysteria, melancholy, and insomnia.
- 14. Valerian a.k.a. fragrant valerian, heliotrope, or vandal root: (Valerian officinalis). One of the best herbs for stress and nervous system disorders. I keep this and Kava Kava tinctures near my bed for those restless nights—it works great!
- **15. Jasmine** (Jasmine Offinale). Jasmine is another great calmative in aromatherapy. The essential oil can be expensive, but some say it is well worth it.
- 16. Borage a.k.a. bugloss, burage, or common bugloss (Borago Officinalis). It has some calmative properties that make it useful for nervous conditions. Prolonged use of Borage is not advisable!

Supplements

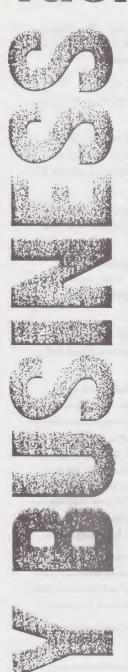
You may use these supplements separately, together, or in conjunction with the herbs stated earlier. Use what you can afford and what fits into your schedule.

- I. It is suggested you should take 2 capsules daily of Aces + Zinc by Carlson Labs. Aces contains Beta-Carotene, Selenium, and Vitamins C & E, which work together as antioxidants to disarm damaging free radicals caused by stress. Aces + Zinc is not vegan. If this is not an issue, it will cost you about \$20 for 90 softgel capsules. However, they do have a vegan version called Aces Gold. It'll run you about 50\$ for 120 tablets, but not only does it contain Vitamin C, E, Beta-carotene, Selenium, and Zinc, but just about everything else stated in this article. If you are interested in this product, go check it out and compare the ingredients. You may have to special order this, but that's usually not a problem for health stores.
- 2. Take Anti-stress Enzymes by Biotic foods, as directed on the bottle. The enzymes remove toxic wastes and restore balance and equilibrium to the system. No one in town carried this, but they said they could special order it for me. So, you will have to research this one for yourself.
- 3. Take 2,000 mg daily of **Chelated Calcium**. Calcium is lost when stress is present.
- 4. Take 1,000 mg daily of Magnesium. Magnesium deficiency is common in highly stressed individuals and can result in anxiety, fear, and even hallucinations.
- 5. Take 100 mg daily of Vitamin B Complex. All B vitamins are necessary for health and proper functioning of the nervous system.

Last, but not least, get enough sleep and eat healthy. Take care! @

Please get in contact: Angel Page, c/o Makoto Recordings, PO BOX 50403, Kalamazoo, MI. 49005 or via e-mail: angelpage@hotmail.com

TICK WORK Making Music Fun Again with Aquarius Records by Srini Kumar



h, to be square. To blithely walk the cavernous halls of Wal Mart, pleasantly guided towards a gleaming treasure trove of plastic merchandise by perky, well-conditioned workers. To secure a cart full of useful commodities crafted by the glorious toil of the proud peoples of the Third World, all in the air-conditioned comfort of The Only Store You Need. To take your place in a long line, have your purchases intimately tracked through one of the world's most advanced database-driven customer loyalty programs, and be reminded about the low, low prices you've just enjoyed by the smiley-face logo that bids you farewell.

To clutch your recent acquisition—perhaps a new Marilyn Manson record, the desire of which has been calculatedly implanted in you through a thoroughly commercialized music media—and be part of a system that completely eclipses your own consciousness. To commute to your place at the family restaurant, assembly line or cubicle farm the next morning, your companion a marketing device tuned to an "alternative" station, patiently teaching you what to desire at Wal Mart the next time you get paid. To know that your lifestyle makes sense, because everyone you know shares it. To smoke a cigarette in reflection, but the thoughts just won't come...

This is how much of America buys its music. Wal Mart is one of the leading retailers of music in America, and they've got the music-ascommodity schtick down pat. Rock and roll-Once the province of poets, punks and other unsavory rebellious types—is now one of the most advanced cultural control mechanisms since the Catholic Church. Music's ability to condition workers is legendary, and the toothless and tame beast that is Mainstream Rock allows people in our society to express their "radical" individualism in such a way that it still fits into Wal Mart's database. And it is through the lure of this false freedom of choice that a proud people have been taught complacency and have accepted the yoke of consumer wage-based capitalism.

Other writers have better expressed the problems with chain record stores and huge major labels—I'm assuming that if you're reading this, you comprehend the basic arguments. But this is a DIY column. You're hopefully reading this because you want to do something, to create something that stands out from the static, that pushes the envelope, that encompasses genuine surprise and delight. One way you can do this—and maybe even pay your bills—is in the context of commerce.

By beginning a truly alternative business, you are presenting the WalMartization of America with that which they most fear—a direct competitor that is cooler than anything their marketing department could ever cook up. Conceive your business as art. Make it beautiful, kick-ass, intense, personal and never, ever boring. We all need to shop—hating commerce isn't going to get you anywhere—but why must it continually be the soul-numbing experience presented to us in the malls and chains? Because, hell, we all gotta buy records, but why buy 'em like the squares do?

Aquarius Records has mastered the art of surprise and delight. This record store resembles a zine. Everywhere you look, there's something to catch your eye—insanely rad photos of Sleater-Kinney and Teengenerate on exhibit, a listening booth showcasing the unheard music of 50 records designed for overuse, and the best selection of Stereolab records in San Francisco. The Dead Kennedys met through an ad on the store's legendary community bulletin board. And—perhaps most important—the store features a staff that really gives a fuck. They've got lessons. Learn 'em.

Punk Planet spoke with Windy Chien, the enthusiastic owner of Aquarius, about the store's long history, wide vision, and deep commitment.

What is special about the way you run Aquarius Records compared to other music stores?

We only carry music we—at least one person on the staff—like, which means we sift through the crap out there so you won't have to! 95% of what gets released is utterly worthless and shouldn't be wasting anyone's time, despite the efforts of the (mostly) major labels to "buy" our—yours and my—ears. Aquarius isn't the size that Tower is, and we don't want to be, because you lose something when you're that big. We don't attempt to carry everything—we try to be a tasteful alternative to big supermarket-type stores.

How has the music culture you grew out of influenced your business philosophy?

Well, being interested in underground music leads to an interest in how the music gets made and how it gets to the people. Once you start looking into stuff like this, you realize how the system is totally set up by the majors to benefit the majors and their greedy ways. The whole system is stacked against underground bands and independent labels and that carries over to independent stores as well. When you know the evil you're dealing with, that shapes your own developing principles about what is right and wrong and what is ethical and what isn't. I could go on and on about this...

Please do!

Well, Nike and Coke need to advertise everywhere all the time so that when you realize you're thirsty, you'll think "I will have a Coke." Aquarius doesn't want to be your store of choice just because you've seen our ads everywhere. We're your store of choice because you know we'll have that obscure record you want, and because you know coming into the store is a nice warm fuzzy experience and the people who work here will turn you on to things you don't already know about.

So how do folks hear about Aquarius?

Many of our customers come to us through word of mouth from friends, and from doing searches on the web and coming up with our web site. We carry a lot of great music that stores like Tower are too stupid to know about. Often we are the only store in the city that has a certain item, or one of only two or three stores in the world. Just a few days ago, a new mail-order customer called us on the phone to place an order. He had called Finland to speak with the Finnish label Bad Vugum, who directed him to us. It turns out that we're one of the only stores in the entire country who cares enough to carry Bad Vugum!

You mentioned you had a web site. How much does that factor into your business plan?

We take our web site (http://aquarius.bianca.com) as seriously as we can, considering that we still need to concentrate on our retail space. We also publish a New Arrivals email list about once a month. The subscribers either sign up on a clipboard at the store, or email us at aqua@sirius.com to subscribe after a friend sends them a copy of the list, or they find our web site. The list has over 3000 subscribers, and that's all voluntary. I have never signed up anyone without their request.

One thing I noticed is that everyone that works at Aquarius is so into it. Most record store clerks that I've encountered elsewhere are pretty jaded— what gives you the edge?

I believe in hiring people who are experts in their field and who are good with people. Then I simply leave them alone to do what they do best, so no one feels like a drone. Everyone here has their own personality and their own fields of expertise, and that translates into a store that is strong because it is a sum of its parts. I believe that if we all have the same general idea about what makes a store good, then we all will work towards that in our own individual ways, and I won't have to constantly be giving orders and feeling like a taskmaster. ¶ I also feel that people ought to experience full fledged involvement in the store, which means that everyone here is allowed to buy used stuff, each person has certain labels they buy from, and each person receives collective support on their own projects (like my coworker Jim's art installations which happen in our back room, my coworker Andee's label, etc). We try to keep the hierarchy at a minimum.

It sounds almost more like you see people who work at Aquarius as, you know, actual human beings!

Hell yeah! All staff people at Aquarius are treated with respect. They earn a living wage and are involved in all aspects of running the store so they can work here and have real lives, as opposed to making minimum wage at Tower and standing behind a cash register all day. One of the best parts about owning Aquarius is getting to work with people I admire and respect—it's a team effort and the results have been stupendous in terms of feeling like a family. This store would be *nothing* without the folks who are working here: Allan Horrocks, Andee Connors, Elisabeth O'Connell, Byram Abbott, Jim Haynes and Marc Kate.

Do you have any advice for people out there who are thinking of putting together a retail project in their town?

Well, one thing to keep in mind is that it's not enough to start a business and be successful, only to fold a couple years later. I'd like to see more alternative businesses that stand the test of time. Here are some simple tips off the top of my head:

- First and foremost, make it totally obvious that you love what you sell. Why would anyone want to buy from someone who doesn't care less about their merchandise?
- Really know who your customers are going to be, and listen to what they want. Once you think like the customers, the stuff you like will be the stuff they like, which makes it easier for everyone!
- Retail stores are supposed to be exciting places. You need to create a space that spawns an atmosphere of excitement. You can do this through your decor, your stock, your people—you should not be afraid to experiment in order to create this atmosphere.
- People always enjoy learning, and if you repeatedly educate people, there's a good chance they will support you. Traditional record stores (and even new-school DJ-style stores) have no descriptions of anything anywhere. You're supposed to do your research beforehand, not ask questions, and buy the wrong thing if you don't know what you're doing. You can do this simply by becoming an expert in your field, whatever that may be.
- For me, it's important to create a space that's warm and friendly and not intimidating to women. Aquarius is really conscious of the nature of our space, and we communicate friendliness through the use of plants, light and color—the exact opposite of your typical chain retail store!
- Finally, you need to hire *people* people—folks who really enjoy talking to the public and turning people on to your stock. This will naturally make the store feel like part of a larger music-loving community.

Alright, so bottom line time: What are you after?

Interview conducted by nonogirl (http://www.nonogirl.com). Are you currently involved in a punk-inflected business? Do you want to answer a couple questions for an upcoming book? Email me at srini@unamerican.com if yeah!

the boom bap



Summer seems to still linger in the distance. A bunch of my mics are being fixed and my amp keeps breaking down. It's been mighty good weather to pace in, but that'll soon change. By the time you read this, the grills will be out, bands will coming through town and I will be inside in rooms that usually have no exterior windows.

Anyway, thanks to the folks who sent me some questions. We'll get to a couple this issue and a couple more next time. Keep 'em coming, please. Questions, jokes, things scribbled on cocktail napkins—I have no ideas of my own. I need your help.

Davey G-

I record on a Yamaha MD4, that minidisc four track thing. I love it, the sound quality is amazing. I do, however, have problems when mixing down. For some reason when I mix down to a cassette, the vocals are slightly lower than on the actual recording. It's not much, but enough to be noticeable. Why is this happening, and what can I do about it? I have tried to change this by upping the pitch control a little, but it still just isn't right.

I also wanted to know the best way to mic a snare drum—from the top? From the side? Thanks in advance

-Wil

First we'll tackle the mysterious lowering of vocal pitch in mix down. I'm gonna hazard a guess that it's not just the vocals that are getting lowered in pitch. I'm betting everything is. To make sure, bounce the vocal track around and see if the pitch changes when it's being mixed out of the different tracks. If it is only happening on some of the tracks, then you've got a problem with your MD4 and the only folks who can fix that are Yamaha.

If bouncing doesn't fix the problem (and I'm wagering it doesn't), I think that it is probably not your four track but rather that your cassette deck is dying. There could be a bunch of things wrong with it, but what-

ever they are, they will cost you very close to—if not more than—what you paid for the deck just to fix (unless you have a sharp Mr/Mz fix it friend who owes you a favor). Replace it.

If you decide buy a new mix down deck, maybe think about stepping up to a more robust mix down format. If you think that the "sound quality is amazing" on your MD4, I am willing to bet you would be pretty giddy about it being captured on a format that can reproduce it capably. Cassettes are great as copies but if you can afford to, you should try and use a master that is a little more archival and well, just sounds a lot better. I will let you decide whether you want to go either the digital or analog route, although I will interject that there is no such thing as a truly archival digital storage medium. Quality magnetic tape has a proven life span and is almost always restorable, while digital formats do not and are not.

For under \$200 you can find a number of used I/4" reel to reels—the Otari MX5050 comes to mind as a fine machine. For DATS and their undeniable convenience, I would look for something like a Tascam DA-20 or a portable Teac or Sony machine. They can be found used, and they don't have the input and output options that you won't need—they will do the job. Now if you get a DAT, buy a cleaning tape and use it. It will drastically extend the time between service calls and help insure more stable data recording and recovery.

While you're saving up for a new mix down deck, try cranking the pitch up more until it sounds "right." This is not a permanent solution by any means but if you can do it, it'll work as a band aid

Another option is to rent a DAT machine when you mix down. You can try a guitar store, but if you know somebody who has one, offer to rent theirs. It'll be cheaper and one less time you have to deal with the notorious guitar shop asshole.

As far as your snare drum micing question goes, I am not trying to be a smart ass when I say there is no best way to mic anything. There are tons of good ways to mic things. What is most important is to consider whether whatever means and method you are using work within the context of the rest of the material.

I think it is really important to look at the drum kit as a whole. The snare drum is a very important piece of that whole, but cannot be removed from the context of the kit. That's why the very first thing you can do to improve your recording of drums is to practice tuning them. Loosen the heads up and tune 'em up all the time. Turn it into something you do regularly, like a push up routine or brushing your teeth. Do it every chance you get. It'll take a while and it won't be fun, but the more you do it the better you will get and the drastically better your recordings will get. Once you've got it down, before you get mics near any part of the kit, have the drummer play his kit and tune the individual pieces until they make sense as a whole.

Now on to the micing itself. It's important to remember that experimentation is key, especially when you have a really limited number of tracks—like on your MD4. Your entire drum mix may take up only one track and may well have bass on it to boot. Try using two mics on the whole kit. Use the snare drum as a starting point and place one up and in the middle of the kit and the other the same distance from the snare drum and out in front of the kick. Then move them around until you hear a good, even balance of your kit. This way you can physically adjust your mix. Want more snare? Move the mics. Less ride? Move the mics. More kick? Move the mics.

You have got to trust your ears. If things don't sound right to you, how will merely documenting that sound make them right? You should always fix things as close to their source as possible. Don't like how your guitar sounds? Mess with the amp. Don't like how your drums sound? Work on the tuning and try moving the drums around the space you are recording in(remember you are recording not only the sound source but the space around it). If you don't dig the space, keep the mics in tighter on the kit. If you dig how they sound in the room, make sure the room is in the picture.

I'm not sure if you wanted a simpler answer, but I really don't think there is one. Really the best way to learn is to ask, listen, watch and try. I hope I'm not coming off too low budget and "grasshopper"-esque here. If you want particulars, e-mail me and I will bore the freaking pants off you. My guess is I've done that already to everyone already.

Hey Davey,

I have a question on CD manufacturers. I want to know if you could recommend a good place or at least tell me what I should be looking for in a place. For example, should I find a place that does everything—CDs as well as inserts and cases—or just a place that does the CDs?

Thanks,

-Corey

Well Corey, your question is kind of a tuffy, but here goes. You have two basic options when you approach manufacturing: use a broker or deal directly with a plant. Whenever you are dealing with anyone concerning manufacturing make sure you establish what exactly their business is. There are pluses and minuses to both brokers and manufacturers but make sure you know who you are dealing with and that they are not misrepresenting themselves. I would ask people who they have used and why.

You will probably pay a little more to go through a broker but theoretically they are then using their leverage to get preferential treatment. I say "theoretically" because some brokers do this very well and others don't. If you are going to use a broker I would highly recommend using one that is located in your area.

That way you are dealing with somebody on a face to face basis and if something goes wrong you can stop in and bypass the convenient blow off known as voice mailboxes (if you are using a plant, you are giving up some of your leverage and location doesn't matter as much).

As for whether you want to get everything done at one place, that depends on how much you want to do yourself. Raw CDs (in a run of 1000-3000) should cost you somewhere from 65-75 cents a CD. A four-color, jewel-boxed, shrink-wrapped CD should cost you between \$1.40 and a \$1.50 a piece. Of course, there are a full range of options between those poles. You decide what assembly you want to do and how much you are willing to pay not to do it.

There are a heap of charges other than the simple manufacturing of a CD to take into account. Absolutely never pay for "glass mastering" in runs of a 1000 or more. That is pretty much standard. Less than a thousand, expect to pay extra for it. When putting together a CD make sure you factor in the cost of outputting your artwork and having negatives made for the printing. Explicitly discuss with whomever you are having manufacture your CD what these costs will be as they are often not included in "package" deals. One of the biggest—and most misunderstood—expenses in CD manufacturing is getting the CD "mastered"

There are only a very few real "mastering" engineers in the world. Mastering used to be a deeply intricate craft that one needed to be a real artisan to do properly. This was back in the age of vinyl-only releases when mastering was a physical process that converted the master tapes into a cut lacquer master disc, which was plated and used to make the manufacturing stampers from.

"Mastering" a CD is physically a much easier process—that's why there are so many more places around now and people doing it. But be very cautious. You get what you pay for. High quality mastering gear is outrageously expensive and gifted precise ears often carry a weighty price tag, hence the super high rates at some places. But if you are looking to spend big bucks, you probably aren't reading this article so I will not even talk about options that weigh in at more than \$500 a day.

It seems in many places you can do competent CD premastering (technically, there is no such thing as "mastering" a CD, as the plant makes the glass master that will be used for production) for \$40-\$50 an hour. How many hours will it take? Figure on spending four times the length of the material. The cost of making a master and DAT backup (always, always, purchase a backup) vary wildly. If the facility is limited in its resources, your goal should be to get the mix down master turned into a production master with as little processing a possible. If you can in any way be present for mastering make sure you are. You can flush a lot of time and money away with one improper and callous processing decision.

Pick somebody you can trust, ask around, see who people have used and what they had to say. If you don't know, ask the mastering

folks for client references. If they refuse, leave. Work with people you can respect and who respect you.

Now that it's been mastered, where do you take it to be pressed? I have heard good things about the plants Americaisc, Disctronix and Nimbus, but there are tons more and I am sure that there are many more fine options. Those are just the places people have recommended to me. As for brokers, if you're gonna use go local. Ask around or call around, see samples, be a pain in the ass.

It seems like CD manufacturers and brokers are becoming sort of like used car or real estate markets. Make sure you get a written quote on any price given to you.

Hope some of this helps.

End Hits

I can't leave without a few irritating and biased items.

I) Great Box Sets. One of the few really good things to come out of the CD age is the reissue box set. They often stink, but when you find a good one, man they are worth it. Two astonishing recent examples are the Booker T and the MGs Time is Tight 3 CD retrospective (simply a must have) and the Nuggets reissue.

Nuggets was a comp done by Lenny Kaye (later to become Patty Smith's guitarist) in the early '70s of overlooked '60s garage rock. Originally a double LP, Nuggets is now a 4 CD compendium of great and overlooked American pre-punk. There is everything from the best songs you hear on "oldies" radio to stuff you have never in your life heard (plus a cut featuring a young Nuge). All I can say is that for me it creates the previously murky and unknown bridge between Link Wray and the Ramones. The next time you sell your N'sync CD look through the box set sections at the used CD place. You can find some amazing stuff for 1/5 of what it cost new because almost no one scours them. Besides, everyone needs all the JBs' singles on two CDs (B-sides included.)

- 2) Decent Tuners. Enough is enough. If you are going to be in a band and play live, buy a decent tuner! No one wants to hear you tune. Buy a tuner. Go to a store try out the various options for \$50 and spend it. Do it. Don't make me or anyone sit through one more milisecond of, "Hey dude, gimme an A."
- 3) "Gig" Bags. You bought a guitar. No matter how much money you spent, it's a lot. Why would you not buy a case? They are \$100 new and 1/2 to a 1/3 of that used. A "gig" bagnothing more than a nylon bag with padding—ensures you only that you will ruin your guitar. Seriously, don't be stupid. I beg you: buy a case for that guitar and toss the "gig" bag in the trash where it belongs.

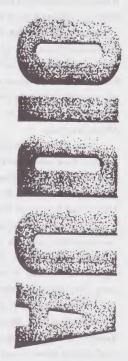
4) Wear Earplugs. I'll be the old man now: you really, really should wear ear plugs. Really. Going deaf sucks. If you play rock or go to shows regularly and don't wear plugs, you will wreck your hearing. I know they are shitty to get used to. It took me five years to get myself to do it. Only when I began to have to rely on my hearing for a living did I finally do it. Once you do, though, it's a piece of cake.

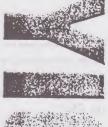
Don't like having all the high end go away from the mushy foam ones? Save up for a month and spend \$15 on "HiFi" plugs which are available from hearing aid places and cut down sound levels while retaining high frequencies. They are sorta rubbery and last a long time, if you don't lose them.

- 5) rec.audio.pro. If you have Internet access, configure your news server to browse the rec.audio.pro news group.

 Always a couple thousand message strong, it is a fountain of information both worthwhile and worthless. "Pro" is largely a misnomer here, but if you are looking for something or info about that something and it is recording-related, this a good place to look. Some tips:
- 1) Sort by subject. It helps you find what you are looking for faster
- 2) Just because it's written doesn't mean it's true. Trust your instinct and remember this whole Internet deal is sort of like playing telephone with slightly better odds.
- 3) If you are looking to research a subject try www.dejanews.com They archive all the news groups and you can search their database for any topic and access posts that relate to what you are looking for.

Until next issue, take care. Look through more used record bins. Write me with questions at daveygee@yahoo.com and I'll try and not make a fool out of myself. One last piece of advice: BBQ more.







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Eileen Myles
Not ME

Eldon Garnet
READING BROOKE SHIELDS

Shulamith Firestone
AIRLESS SPACES

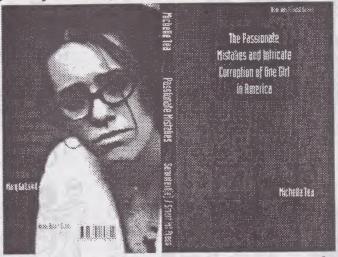
Eileen Myles & Liz Katz
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Deran Ludd Sick Burn Cut

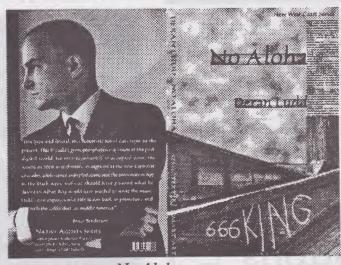
Kathy Acker
HANNIBAL LECTER, MY FATHER

Lynne Tillman
THE MADAME REALISM COMPLEX

Barbara Barg
The Origin of the Species



MICHELLE TEA, The Passionate Mistakes and Intricate Corruption of One Girl in America "A hunk of lyric information that coolly, then frantically, describes the car wreck of her generation."



DERAN LUDD, No Aloha

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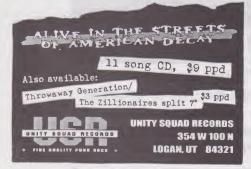
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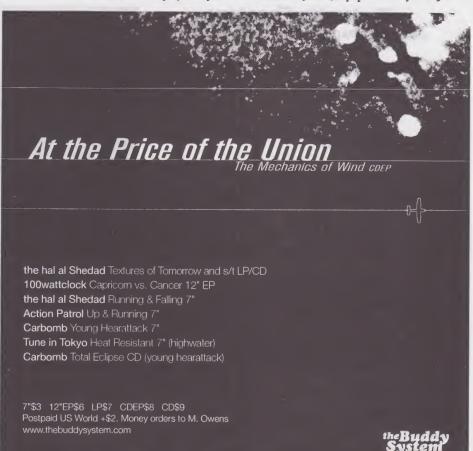
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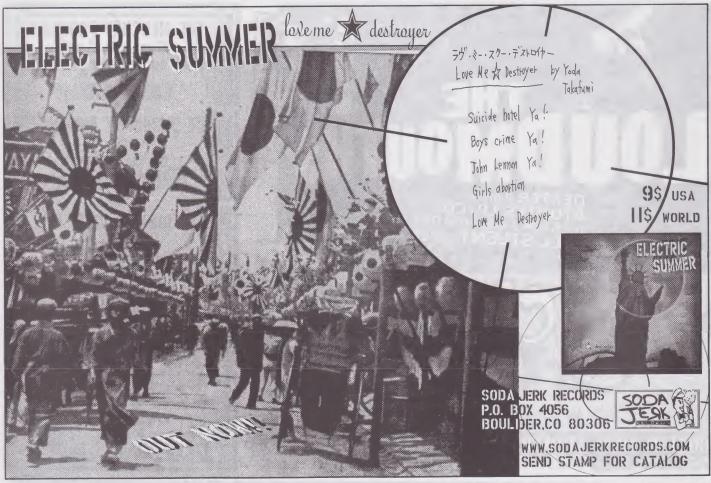


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season now. also have shirts, buttons, and stickers if anyone is the summer months, as we'll be gone for most of the $_{\mbox{\scriptsize o}}$



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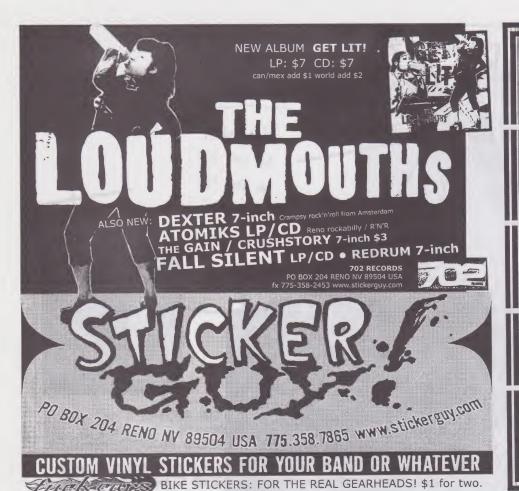
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MUSIC



81 MULBERRY, 7" A very heavy (the actual weight) double 7 inch. From what I heard (I was doing the dishes) it was some emo stuff. The kind where it gets soft then heavy then emotional all in one song. The packaging looks nice. Just don't write and complain to Punk Planet that I didn't listen to the whole thing. (BC)

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440 SIX-PACK - ONE MORE ROUND, 7" Owing a lot to Motorhead, this is serious hard-rocking punk with attitude, but without the stupidity that accompanies much in this genre. 4 songs of pure punk mayhem that you'll want to get for those late night drinking sessions. (MH) 440 Six-Pack PO Box 420823 SF CA 94142-823

999 – SLAM!, CD Early 80's demos of some of 999's second wave of releases and some unreleased tracks. This is for the real 999 fan, like myself. If don't have anything by this band try to find the LP "Paints by Numbers" which is a collection of their singles or their self titled LP and order this while you are waiting to find those two gems. This is a little to raw for most and frankly isn't their best material. I dug this as a fan though. (EA)

Overground PO Box INW Newcastle Upon Tyne NE99 INW

AFFRONT — S/T, 7" On the outside they try to make this record look like political hardcore. Hell, the label is even called Pro-Pane Existence. Yet inside, all we have is another Gorilla Biscuits clone and lyrics that represent weak attempts at humor. I tried to laugh but the lack of creativity did nothing for me. A song called "Come Out Of The Closet.." Take a guess on the content for that one. It's a call-out to those who pretend to hate Epitaph bands and how they must stay true to Rancid. My dog is smarter then this band. (SY)

Propane Existence, PO BOX 42339, Washington, D.C. 20015

AGAINST ALL AUTHORITY - ALL FALL DOWN, CD Carrying on the tradition started years ago by Operation Ivy, AAA mix their punk rock with ska to get that skank-able and mosh-able sound. I haven't liked this stuff since Op Iv did it, and AAA is no exception. Personal tastes aside, AAA are a pretty solid band and take a good political angle on their songs. The punk aspects of this band are pretty raw, with vocals spat rather than sung. The songs are speedy. But if you ask me, this genre has gone way too far. (SM)

Hopeless Records, PO Box 7495, Van Nuys, CA 91409

AINA – s/T, LP Mid-tempo emo with indie rock tinges. I have to admit I don't listen to any music that sounds like this so I'm having trouble describing it. But it does remind me a lot of earlier Braid stuff though maybe not quite as technical. It's well-produced and the songs well-written and solidly played so I would guess that anybody into this kind of slower stuff would be happy. Me, I need a lot more speed and power to be satisfied. (KB)

B-Core disc, PO Box 35221, 08080 Barcelona, Spain

THE APERS — LOVE IS A BATTLEFIELD... AND WE'RE THE STORMTROPPERS, 7" Modern pop-punk with a touch of 199 pop thrown in to leave a nice sound that stands a little above the rest. The Star Wars reference being ten years too late, but otherwise a nice package indeed. You always know you got rock and roll when 2 out of 4 songs have "girlfriend" in the title. Not a bad pick in this day in age for sure. (EA)

It's from Rotterdam so e-mail at aper@bigfoot.com

ASSEMBLY OF DEVICES - FABLE OF A DECONSTRUCTION 7" It's a bit hard to describe this music except to say that it really sucks. Bad vocal harmonies. The music is very boring, sort of like off-key New Age music or maybe folk rock with a jazz influence. Repetitive. Blah, blah, blah. Use as Frisbee if desired. (DDK)

Aesthetics Records

AUTUMN 80 - SHADES AND COLORS, EP At first I thought this was maybe an indie band. Then a hardcore band. Then a pop punk band. Now I dunno. They're a band, and they're a little all over the place. The vocals aren't all that great and the recording kinda stinks. (SM) Nice Transportation Records, 1737 Triangle Circle, Denver. NC 28037

AVAIL - OVER THE JAMES, CD I don't know why I am reviewing this, you already have owned it and memorized the lyrics by now and frankly if you don't own it you won't buy it after reading this any ways. Avail are the kings of the pop/crust kids that hang out around town. If I see one more Avail patch on the back of a backpack. I know, but Jeezuz the hype never warranted their rather bland style of emo-hard guy-pop and I did listen to it. I have also seen them live (my band played with em years ago) and I was impressed by the swarm and power and energy they and their fans had. That is my point I think you either get it or you don't. I don't, but all the power to the Avail fans just leave that backpack at home. (EA)

AVENGERS - DIED FOR YOUR SINS, CD | remember how excited I was to get the first two songs from this CD a few years back on a hard to get Swedish single. Now you can hold "Teenage Rebel" and "Friends of Mine" as well as some other demo/alternate tracks including "White Nigger" in your grubby little hands. You can also get a partial reformed Avengers with Lookout session folks sitting in to record some of the unreleased songs studio style. This is an odd thing to do, especially in the middle of a CD but it really isn't too annoying. The second half of the CD is taken form a bunch of live performances with some great banter between songs. With the onslaught of bootlegs of Avengers stuff you should buy this for the extra tracks and because it is the only record that they will get money from. You still have to get a boot copy of the LP if you don't have it, why on Earth Lookout didn't get the rights for that as well.... its beyond me. (EA)

Lookout! Records.

BEAVER FEAVER - TAKE ONE, 7" If you are ever in Rotterdam, be sure to check out the spectacular architecture. (And if you like anthematic punk, then check out Beaver Feaver). (MD)

Little People Records PO box 21145, 3001 AC Rotterdam, Holland

BENT LEG FATIMA - s/T, CD Makes you think indy rock at first, then changes. Some songs seem based around a rhythmic idea or musical phrase which is then slowly and noisily deconstructed. Some of it reminded me of Can, but less hard. Innovative. (AL)

File 13. PO Box 2302, Philadelphia. PA. 19103

BILLY CLUB - SERVE LOUD, CD Short (7 songs) but sweet, this CD offers up a serious blast of old-school punk from these old-school punkers. If you're into bands like GBH and the like, Billyclub have what you want. The only real bummer is that this is only 18 minutes or so long. (MH)

Coldfront PO Box 8345 Berkeley CA 94707

BILLYCLUB- OUT TO LUNCH, CD Texas Punk! Heavy guitar with scratchy vocals, just the way mom likes it. "Blitz" sounds like Pantera doing "On a Rope" by RFTC. And as a rule in Texas, the band does a song about a car. So if you are into that kind of rock then this is for you my friend. (BC)

IDOL Records P.O. Box 720043, Dallas, TX. 75372

THE BILLY NAYER SHOW - THE VILLAIN THAT LOVE BUILT, CD Quirky, well played pop with silly lyrics like some Zappa, sung deadpan. "you were with me, I was with you, the sun shined, bacteria grew..." (AL) BNS Production, PO Box 42385, San Francisco, CA. 94142

BIONIC MAN - S/T, CD Old-school hardcore in the vein of Minor Threat and Seven Seconds. Three chords. yelled vocals and all that. While lots of these throwback bands sound cheesy, Bionic Man sounds almost genuine. The CD packaging is the most amateurish I've seen vet - a iewel case, but with inserts that were probably made with a 1980s dot matrix printer. (SM)

4015 Bunker Hill Rd., Cottage City, MD 20722

BLACK ARMY JACKET - 222, CD The significance of the number 222. Perhaps not quite evil enough for the full number of the beast? Don't expect anything less here then great metallic hardcore. Tight riffs and aggressive blasts. I was fully content with Black Army Jacket's material on the Hemlock split but this is a whole different level. While at one time this band may have been driven by low frequency sludge, the songwriting has changed. Influences of 80's hardcore and some hints at the hardcore styling of the Japanese, it's intelligent and not just aggressive slop. A dual vocal attack keeps you alert in your listening. Essential listening. (SY)

Chainsaw Safety Records, PO BOX 260318, Bellrose, NY 11426-0318

THE BLACKS - CALL THE SHOTS, 7" Oblivians fans take note. The Blacks are your cup of tea (or long neck bottle if you prefer). The stripped down rock and roll, blues stuff the Blacks lay down on this single is right up there with the great singles the Oblivians put out a few years back. (EA)

Big Neck Records PO Box 8144 Reston, VA 20195

BLOOD BROTHERS AND MILE MARKER - SPLIT. 7" Two from Mile Marker, "IRC to the CIA" and "Battleship" and one from Blood Brothers, "Data Perversion." Both bands play loud, dirty noise style punk with lots of distorted vocals and big chords. Not enough here for me to really judge these bands, but overall I think this is pretty cool. Nice cover art too. (JK)

Action/Recation PO box 2166 Seattle, WA 98111

BLUE ONION - WHAT'D WE BREAK THIS TIME ..., 7" This band broke up and then put out this record. Hope they didn't make too many copies. Sloppy, poppy punk rock, whiny vocals, bad recording, stupid lyrics. The world will not miss this musical outfit. (SM)

No! No Recordings, 1826 Virnankay, Ann Arbor, MI 48103

THE BOOMLIKE - ANY DAY OF THE NIGHT CD This is going to sound weird, but the first song reminded me of Jimmy Hendrix with big horns instead of big guitar. Then the CD settled into a jazz, funk groove. All instrumental, lots of horns, keyboard, drums, and some guitar. I found the pro-

duction to be a bit tinny. For me, it's just slightly quirky background music. Too jazz for my taste. (DDK)

BORIS THE SPRINKLER - SUCK, CD The new Boris CD is good, a mean real good. The thing is I almost always enjoyed their singles, reading the fine print and laughing at the covers, but now they put out a full length that does it for me. The lyrics aren't as fun as some of the early tracks, but still worth reading along with. Musically, Boris has excelled a lot, I think that now they now get the Vince Lombardi award for modern pop-punk (so the kids call it). Is it because they are staying together or ???? Ha, Check out Hitlist to read Rev. Norb's column while you are at it. You already own this as well, so I could say anything I suppose - like do you own the 24 kt gold version (with blue labels) of the "Drugs and Masturbation" single or do you only own the other 12 versions. (EA)

Go Kart PO Box 20 Prince St Station NYC NY 10012

BOY KICKS GIRL - PUBLIC DISPLAY OF AGGRESSION, CD Pennywise. (MD)

B.K.G. PO box 18914. San Jose, ca 95158

BOYCOT / YUPPIECRUSHER - SPLIT, 7" Again, 1 am amazed by Boycot. Total Crucifix-influenced intense hardcore. Straightforward but keeps your interest indefinitely. After listening to that side five or so times, the flip side? Yuppiecrusher play old school punk rock that reminds me of the English Subhumans. Nothing slow, and anger charged. Both these European bands have a heavy social-political opinion and are speaking issues close to home. I'm also amazed at how thick this vinvl is and how good it sounds. Puts URP vinyl to shame. A must, order through Sound Idea. (SY)

Sacro K-Baalismo, felberstr. 20/12, a-1150 wien, AUSTRIA

BOYCOT/YUPPIECRUSHER - SPLIT 7" My god, this is the thickest, heaviest vinyl I think I've ever had the pleasure of laying on my turntable. This fucker will never ever warp. Nifty orange splatters too. Anyway, Boycot - how could this be any better? Super fast, blasting HC with crunchy ass guitars. I especially like the song "Old Punx". Awesome stuff from great folks that have been around the block several times but still stick to their DIY ideals. They'll be touring in South America this summer! One of only a handful of DIY bands that have ventured over to the land of amazing generosity and fucked up political repression. The vocals on the Yuppiecrusher side were way too loud and everything else sounded too clean and weak (where is the distortion on the guitars?). This is unfortunate because the songs are catchy, simple, upbeat punk tunes with cool kind of galloping drums. The songs seem to somehow improve in energy level as the 7" goes on (could have something to do with the fact that the Fat Wreck Chords vocals disappear after the first song). Comes with an informative booklet called "Supporting Class Struggle Prisoners," half in English and half in German. (KB)

Sacro K-Baalismo, Felberstr. 20/12, A-1150 Wien, Austria

BRAZEN - S/T, 7" I took an instant liking to this record. Cross influences of both Born Against and Shotmaker and you get a band that can't fail. Only two songs from these Geneva rockers on this record. I could use some more. A simple packaging layout with great artwork on the back cover. Much Needed. (SY) Brazen, 29 Palettes, 1212 Geneva Switzerland

BURNING AIRLINES - MISSION CONTROL!, CD | have always been a big Jawbox fan, and Burning Airlines reminds me of why its so. This record has the hooks, I mean the real hooks that catch you the first time you hear a song. Robbins is a master of keep the lyrics simple and getting you to sing along the first time you hear a song. Its just to catchy to not love. The lyrics are so hard to figure out, and that is the charm to their songs. About six or seven years ago I interviewed Robbins and when he explained how the lyrics are supposed to be so open to interpretation I stopped looking for the real meaning. but found my own meanings to Jawbox songs. I know that Bill and J. are sick of the comparisons to their former band, but it is so easy that one must do it. I can't suggest this record enough to the fans of this sound, and yes it could be played on Much Music or MTV and it may not be that out of place but this is real. (EA) Desoto Records PO Box 60335 WDC 20039

CAPTAIN DESTINY & THE MOTOR MEDICS -DESTINATION: 2049, CD | am no artist, nor do | know a friggin' thing about design. That's the domain of the Chicago freaks of this mag. I am officially an economics major, but I tell all my friends I may as well have majored in record collecting, ('accumulating' my mom calls it) but I know butt-ugliness when I see it. Power lines are butt ugly. Parking lots are butt ugly. Bob Dole's weird hand is butt ugly. The cover art for this CD is buttfriggin'-ugle, and I guarantee I would never buy anything that looks this dumb. Or sounds this bad, for that matter - bad punk/ska with horrible production and lifeless songs. I can't he!p but think of Shane White's reviews for MRR ... 'what's this ... this makes me go limp ... I can't fuck to this song ... oh well, I have to run and find some hapless boys...." He'd write something to that effect. I say this: thanks for the jewel case. Yours wasn't broken. Most review copy cases are. (GG)

Rockalachian records PO Box 19760 Cincy, OH 45219

CERULEAN - CERULEAN CD The only thing unusual about his band is that they come from Germany but sound like they are American. Otherwise, they play very middle of the road emo rock. With the prerequisite sensitivity. Bored the crap out of me. (DDK)

Abridged Records

THE CHARGERS - S/T. 7" A rock - n - roll ditty of a single form the heartland of Cleveland. You gotta love the city that had brought us so many great rock an roll songs. The Chargers add a few to the bottom of the list, but are a few

Our review policy is very simple: Independently published? We review it. However, that doesn't mean that it gets a good review. If a reviewer likes your zine, you get a good review. If a reviewer doesn't like it, you don't. It's not institutional policy that your zine is good or that it's bad, it's just one reviewer's opinion—so don't freak out. We're sure you put a good deal of work into your project, and that alone is certainly worth some congradulations! But please, if you're pissed at a review, remember: it's not Punk Planet, it's just one reviewer.

WUSIC

steps and maybe singles away from getting to the opening up for the mighty Pagans stage. Would fit beautifully on a bill with fellow Buckeyes the New Bomb Turks. (EA)
Undy Rock Records 15629 Cleveland OH 44110

CHICK MAGNET 225- '65 EP, CD Pretty basic stuff here. Noisy rock with lyrics like "Rats, big ones, big fat fucking rats, we all eat shit to get more shit." But you got to cut them some slack. They are from Bennington, VT. (where?) I think they just released Van Halen's 1984 up there last week. The cover has a nice picture of a car though. (BC)

C.M. 225 Box 811 N. Bennington, VT. 05257

THE CHINESE LOVE BEADS — ELECTRICO, 7"
Cool garage punk that totally rocks. Could easily fit into
Rip Off Records with the right recordings and some uptempo songs. Seriously. Comes with a patch and a sticker. I like them. (GG)

Discos Yucky Bus PO Box 40716 ABQ NM 87196

THE CHINESE LOVE BEADS — s/T, 7" I can only say more of what I wrote in my other review. This recording seems to throw a slight reverb on the vocals that I can't get into, but overall this is more cool stuff. Primitive punk rock and roll with cool hand screened packaging. I hope they mature and get noticed by some people, because they have potential. (GG)

THE CHUBBIES — MY FAVOURITE EVERYTHING, CD The Chubbies hold a special place in my heart for their sweet soft rock that all of you would probably find lame and your mother would like. You gotta understand that once you reach an age that hardcore isn't always the answer, oh kids, one day you will see? This seven song CD is mellower than their previous releases, but still got it. (EA) Sympathy for the Record Industry

COASTERSRIDE — S/T, 7" This is confusing, so hold tight and listen — Coastersride are an excellent band from Japan, whose single was released in Sweden and have an enclosed United States contact address. I am sure the hipsters have sucked this single out of circulation. Sounds a lot like a Teengenerate, but more like the Registrators trying to sound like the Devil Dogs. Oh yeah, I did mention they were Japanese so even the English I wouldn't understand. This is a hit record though, from its cheap "I don't care about quality" sleeve to its fuzzed out recordings. Why hasn't Rip Off put this out? (EA)

THE COLE QUINTET/LINDSAY - SPLIT PICTURE DISC, 7" You gotta love picture discs. Especially really good ones, like this split. Side one: The Cole Quintet aren't fucking around. They play angry, harsh hardcore, with a vocalist screaming his head off and guitars not afraid to stay over to the metal side of things. They keep the songs slow, short and brutal. Good stuff. Side two: Lindsay keep up the brutal metal routine, but do it faster and with higher pitched more screaming. More good stuff. (SM)

Paracelcius, Hambergstr. 12 - 37124 Rosdorf, Germany

CUCSIFAE - S/T, CD This is definitely the surprise of the bi-month. Being a complete idiot I missed them when

I had the chance to see them. But I got a copy of their demo which I thought was pretty good but nothing too special. On the other hand, this CD is great! Very melodic and light with a punk influence peeking out every so often. I could do without the more rock moments though. Overall very pleasant and easy to listen to with the occasional true gem like "Carlin" and "When I Go" that showcases what I would consider to be their "signature sound". The irresistibly cute and charming Lucas, formerly of Fun People (one of my all-time favorites) sings and plays guitar. Lyrics in Spanish and English. (KB)

De La Fae Records, C.C. No. 71, Ituzaingo-C.P. 1714, Buenos Aires, Argentina

CUCSIFAE/MOVIL VISSION - SPLIT CD | am by no means a fan of ska-punk but there are a few bands that I like that mix the 2 styles like (of course) Operation lvy and Mojiganga. Movil Vission remind me a bit of Mojiganga - the music may sound ska or ska-punk at times but most of the lyrics seem political, there are lots of group-shouted choruses, and I have to admit that I really like it even though what sounded like a wah-pedal on a bass during the first song initially turned me off. Not all their songs are ska-influenced either; a few are straight up punk or hardcore and some are like ambient pieces (!). Good stuff. More mixed-bag stuff from Cucsifae who vary between hardcore, pop, and even light almost Beatles-esque rock. I really can't describe their sound because their influences are all over the place. Interesting use of sound effects like chirping birds. These songs tend to be a little too slow and commercial sounding for me and the grunge elements are scary. But their more punk/HC and melodic songs are so awesome. I wish they'd spend more time developing that aspect of their sound because they really have a unique style. (KB) De La Fae C.C. No. 71. Ituzaingo-C.P. 1714. Buenos Aires, Argentina

El Movil Discos, C.C. No. 4556, Cap. Fed.-C.P. 1000, Buenos Aires, Argentina

CUTOFF - MAKIN' THE BREAKFAST, CD Pop punk for the kids. Fast, melodic with vocals like Ben Weasel. (AL) Page Music Distro. 20 Railside Rd., North York.
Ontario. M3A tA3

THE DARLINGTONS - BOWLING BETTY, 7" Very catchy poppy punk rock with lots of hooks. (MD)
Mutant Pop 5010 NW Shasta. Corvallis. OR 97330

DEAD SEASON - S/T, 7" A 4 song 7" of Canadian melodic hardcore. What differentiates between Canadian hardcore and American hardcore? Canadian is always better, just look at the beer... Some intricate guitar playing that only adds to the intensity. Influences of Drive Like Jehu and Kerosene 454 while also having the ability to rock out. They pull it off twice as good live. (SY) Salinger Press, 180 Rosetta. Auburn Hills, MI 48326

DECAY — BACK IN THE HOUSE, 7" The music starts and I realize that it's not just another American waste of vinyl. Four Japanese kids who listened to Sick Of It All, loved it to death, and took it to the extreme. It doesn't sound rehashed at all and is full of

energy. 3 songs sung in English but with very heavy accents. Excellent. (SY)

Suburban Home, 1750 30th St. #365, Boulder, CO 80301

DEMON SYSTEM 13 - FOR THE KIDS, NOT THE BUSINESS, 7" These guys are the shit. Charging, no-frills early 80s American style hardcore that sometimes sounds so much like Minor Threat it's unbelievable. They are by no means derivative though and the energy and attitude of this band is absolutely undeniable and infectious. Straightforward HC with a total DIY attitude and rousing, straight to the point lyrics that aren't afraid of being painfully critical or contagiously positive. One of the best song titles ever: "War is Menstrual Envy". I listen to this all the time. (KB)

Insect, Postfack 58, 11674 Stockholm, Sweden Communichaos Media, Box 825, 10136 Stockholm, Sweden.

THE DINING ROOM SET - S/T, CD Bubblegum pop Stuff with organ and curiously high pitched happy vocals, like the guy from Junior High/Crackerbash. They sound like they're having fun. (AL)

Growth, PO Box 1162, Sun Valley, CA. 91352

DOC HOPPER- ZIGS, YAWS, & ZAGS, CD More rock from one of the East Coast hardest working bands. Doc Hopper has never really seemed to get the attention that they deserve. But I don't want to cry you a friggin' river now do I? With catchy title like "ceremony for a fat lip", "I wish I was a ninja", and "crash course in sleeping alone", these boys delivers some guitar driven melodic rock. Like a messy mixture of Queers, Superchunk, and Sinkhole all into one big pot. (BC)

Go Kart Records P.O. Box 20 Prince Street Station, New York, NY. 10012

 ${f DogPiss}$ - ${f Eine}$ ${f KLiene}$ ${f Punkmusik}$, ${f CD}$ ${f Early}$ ${f Green}$ ${f Day + NOFX = Dogpiss}$. (MD)

Honest Don's, PO box 192027, SF, CA 94119-2027

DOROTHY- HEADRUSH IN OHIO, 7" Some dude who raps over fuzzy industrial beats. Probably will get signed some day and live near me, but on the richer side of the tracks. And then one afternoon drive past me in his nice car and say "now look at this "some dude" guy Mr. reviewer dickhead!" (BC)

W.W. Records 323 Broadway East #207, Seattle, WA. 98102

THE DOUBLE - A SOMETHING NETWORK, CD 3 long songs that have that art rock/"jamming" quality, like they have set and improvised parts. The drummer leads, Dirty 3 style. (AL)

Speculation, 4 Vetter Court, North Brunswick, NJ. 08902

DRESSY BESSY - PINK HEARTS YELLOW MOONS, CD I've come up with a phrase to describe this sound: foofy la-la moosic. Dressy Bessy play pleasant, non-abrasive, melodic tunes; with girl vocals, slow tempos, maybe with even a hint of fifties bubblegum pop influences. It's good stuff, but definitely not exciting. (SM)

Kindercore Records, PO Box 461, Athens, GA 30603

DURIAN - S/T, 7" Big production and drum sound. Sounds accessibly college rockin' the way Rain Like The

Sound Of Trains did. 2 songs. (AL)
Diver City, 1718 M. St. NW, Box 139, Washington, DC.

E-150 - La Rabia Justifica Los Medios, 7" Fuck!!! This is too amazing for words. It was recorded something like 6 months after they got together and it blows away almost everything I've heard in the past 2 years. Pure energy driven, maniacal hardcore - fast as fuck and relentless. Dual vocals alternately shouting, screaming, yelling and bursting and crazy intense distinctive drumming. The lyrics (in Spanish with explanations in English and Spanish) are definitely of the variety that you can sing and throw your fists in the air along to. Unfortunately this 7" is out of print as of this writing but will be repressed by Lengua Armada in the US (maybe by the time you read this). Any fan of hardcore MUST have this record. Go see them with His Hero is Gone this August in the US! (KB)

DIY Product, J. Luis Domínguez, Apdo. 609, 08913 Badalona, Spain

Lengua Armada, 2340 W. 24th St., Chicago, IL 60608

E-150/IVICH - SPLIT 7" I saw this record at a show last summer and my friend Michele immediately grabbed it out of the crate. "Do you know this band E-150? You HAVE to get this!" We listened to it that night at his place and I was absolutely floored. He then played me their 7" (see above review) and I was flabbergasted. This is just as raging and mind-blowing as their 7". It's unbelievable that any band could be this amazing. Lyrics in Spanish translated into English and French with explanations. Ivich is not so much my cup of tea though I know that they are highly regarded by people into the more emo-hardcore side of things. Those of you familiar with French hardcore probably already know them, otherwise it's kind of dark-sounding hardcore with intriguing drumming, shouted vocals, and some weird guitar and bass work that shouldn't fit together (it does). Not bad but compared to E-150 anybody would look second-rate. Lyrics in French translated into English and Spanish with explanations. I think this record is still available through some distros (try Vacuum in the US). (KB)

Stonehenge, Christophe Mora, 21 Rue des Brosses, 78200 Magnanville, France

E-150/UNABOMBER - SPLIT 7" Here we go again with 3 more furious, full-on political hardcore attacks/songs from Barcelona's (Badalona's I mean) gift to the world, E-150. They just never disappoint. Insane super-charged, powerful HC from the best in the genre. In the words of my friend Nick, "It's fucking beautiful." I couldn't have put it better. They are my nominees for the best new punk band. Unabomber are a lot less speedy to say the least. They play a mix of different punk/HC styles with abrupt transitions. I'm-hurling type vocals. and sometimes bizarre breaks. I can't say it flows all that well musically but their lyrics are great. "First Manliftingbanner, everyone's into communism. Then Shelter, everyone's Krishna. Now Path of Resistance, everyone's idiot." There's an interesting brief article (in Spanish) about global economics and the spread of

democracy as well as a pretty humorous "frequently asked questions" section about DIY Product. Quantities of this 7" are pretty limited so move it quick! (KB) DIY Product, J. Luis Domínguez, Apdo. 609, 08913 Badalona, Spain

Don't Belong, M.G.S., PO Box 8035, 33200 Xixón, Spain

EGRESS/LONG WAY HOME - SPLIT, CD L.W.H is "emo" the way Bisybackson's newer stuff is. Egress is similar but with more distortion and rockingness. Sometimes the Egress singer sounds a little like the guy from Drive Like Jehu, which is a good thing. (AL) Equinox. PO Box 292023, Dayton, OH. 45429

ELECTRIC FRANKENSTEIN — I'M NOT YOUR NOTHING, CD A 3 song CD. Hmmph. Strike 1. Victory Records. Double hmmph. Strike 2. At least the jewel case is intact. Broken jewel case, the bane of a record reviewer's existence. The music: Home run. Good. Damn good rock and roll, pure and simple. The vocalist could be improved upon, that's for damn sure, but the guitar sound is thick and lush, the drumming is rock solid. Electric Frankenstein satisfies, pure and simple. (GG) Victory Records PO Box 146546 Chicago, IL 60614

EUPHONE - THE CALENDAR OF UNLUCKY DAYS, CD When I first got this, I thought it was going to be some kind of crappy emo stuff, but luckily I was wrong. Euphone create some very enjoyable, laid back instrumental music that doesn't follow any specific style. There are some jazz influences on here and a little electronica influence, but not enough to qualify in either category. Unlike many instrumental bands who create boring, aimless instrumental music, Euphone focus upon the melody and songcraft, rather than just weird experimentation. Very cool stuff. Highly recommended. (JK) Jade Tree 2310 Kennwynn Rd. Wilmington. DE 19810

EVERSOR - LAST CHANCE +2, 7" Punky guitar rock from Italy. This sounds a lot like later period 7 Seconds stuff. A bit muddy in the mix, but a decent record nonetheless. (MH)
Dogprint PO Box 2120 Teaneck NJ 07666

EXIT: 86- s/T, CD 86 is probably a young band that will look through these pages to see just what the evil Punk Planet reviewer had to say about their contribution to the world of rock and roll c.d.'s. To start with the cover is a cool collage of these 50's ads. The songs are very melodic and deal with girlfriends and all that. At times they pull of a Sicko type of a feel. This is when they are at their best. At worse they sound like all the million other pop-punk bands that are still rocking your local VFW. (BC) Exit_86@hotmail.com

FALL SILENT - SUPERSTRUCTURE, CD Grindy metallic political noisecore. Shreddy vocals with heavy chunka guitars. Too much metal for my taste, but this is still is very well done. Fans of this stuff will love it. (MH)
Revolutionary Power Tools PO Box 15051 Reno NV 89507

FENRIR'S REVENGE — THE MYTH OF OUR OWN INTELLIGENCE, CD This album has a theme: humanity sucks. Alternately critical of himself and other

people, a one-person electronic project (guitar, drum machine/beats, processed vocals sometimes) that is pretty credible but fails to show me the soul this sort of music needs. Electronic music, because it is digital, tends to lack something, as this does. I have a feeling the guy has a pretty solid sense of humor, but not enough to make up for the limp sound. (GG) 5521 Greenville Ave. Box 104-545 Dallas TX 75206

FINE TO DRIVE - S/T, CD How can I put this tactfully ... this is dirtbag rock. The singer growls and screams and is just way too dramatic, the guitars are all sludgy, the whole thing just feels dirty. Like Soundgarden but really worse. For people into this type of thing, don't let me stand in your way. I just can't find anything redeeming about this. (SM)

Pop Smear 6687 Sonoma Hwy., Santa Rosa, CA 95409

THE FLASHING ASTONISHERS — EVERYTHING IS GONNA STOP, CD Lame indy rock. I'll finally make the statement I've been considering for a while: only release indy rock records if your band is real good. Otherwise, forget it. Flat out bad idea. (GG)
Koala Records PO Box 70 Syracuse. NY 13210

THE FUMES — PURE BAD LUCK, CD Why is this so hard for bands to replicate? I listen to a lot of stuff when I review, almost all of it terrible crap. The amount of things worth buying is so small it's nearly insignificant, to use statistical jargon. This is the outlier, meaning an exception — an awesome album totally worth buying. Kick ass, amped up, drunken rock and roll. Great. (GG)

Scooch Pooch 5850 West 3rd St. #209 LA. CA 90036

FYP - INCOMPLETE CRAP VOL. 2, CD Well, a lot of this is sorta crap, but it is fun in its own way. This CD includes some early singles, songs from comps and split singles, and, if you can believe it, a cover version of the first Red Cross 12" and a Dwarves song. Actually, even when they are off, FYP is on with the punk rock. Not essential, but one hell of a lot of fun. (MH)

GAMEFACE - EVERY LAST TIME, CD One word: emotion. (MD)

Recess Records PO Box 1112 Torrance CA 90505

Revelation

THE GAMITS — THIS IS MY BOOMSTICK, CD Poppunk, melodic. I have trouble distinguishing this stuff apart from anything else. Sorry. (GG)

To the Left 914 Pleasant St. Boulder. CO 80302

THE GODSHATEKANSAS - MISCHIEF IS ITS OWN REWARD, CD My roommate, Justin, says this band reminds him of Subincision, but more listenable. You know, that 924 Gilman sound. (MD)

Bad Monkey 473 North St., Oakland, Ca 94609

GRIEVANCE - MIRANDA, LP This was definitely a nice surprise. The artwork on this is really intriguing and reflects the sound of the band pretty well. This is much more power-driven than their previous releases which tended to fall flat of their totally brutal live performances. This is unashamed metallic HC that feels really layered and multi-textured. There is a lot of stuff all going on at

MUSIC

once but it blends nicely together. It's definitely not the fastest stuff I've heard recently but pretty powerful in its own right. The vocals are absolutely the best part unbelievably brutal female vocals that give you chills. Darkly poetic lyrics in Italian. The only drawback is the production which is muddy but that could just be my copy which was sent to me from Italy in a flimsy cardstock envelope without any kind of cardboard. (KB) SOA Records c/o Paolo Petralia, via Oderisi da Gubbio 67/69, 00146 Rome, Italy

GROOVIE GHOULIES - FUN IN THE DARK, CD By now you should know if you are into this Ramones influenced pop band. If you do, all I can say is that you will not be disappointed. (MD)

Lookout

GROOVIE GHOULIES - FUN IN THE DARK, CD By now you should know if you are into this Ramones influenced pop band. If you do, all I can say is that you will not be disappointed. (MD)

Lookout!

GROUSER/ CARBUNCLE- SPLIT, 7" Grouser is sloppy, and Carbuncle is even sloppier and madder. (Or is it more mad?) Lots of yelling and noisy guitars. From Porcelain productions, so the name says it all. What a great reviewer I am (BC)

P.O. Box 9933 Richmond, VA. 23228

HAGFISH- CAUGHT LIVE, CD Let me start this with saying that I like Hagfish very much. (I placed at the top of my 1998 list) And I find myself liking about 50% of the punk live records that are out. And this one is in the good half of the 50%. You can hear all the instruments and get a good feeling for the songs. They play all the hits from their two great records and some other treats. The only drawback is that some of the between song gibberish is the sort of "hey we're in a cool band, but we are playing it off like we are fools" type of stuff. And the fact that live shows are meant to be seen as well as heard. But that doesn't distract too much from the great rock that Hagfish can belt out. (BC) Coldfront Records P.O. Box 8345 Berkeley. CA. 94707

HAYWOOD - MODEL FOR A MONUMENT, CD Haywood is a band that knows it will eventually get there and doesn't bother to hurry. Their sparse rock tunes plod along at a comfortable pace - not too slow, but certainly not very fast. The singer is reassuring, with soft-spoken and low vocals, occasionally straining a bit to sing more loudly. A few songs pick up the pace and very nearly rock, giving the album a bit of variety. I'm having a hard time with a category for Haywood, but I guess this is a college-rock sort of band. I picture them wearing flannels and bobbing their heads a lot on stage. I like this CD. (SM) Mag Wheel Records, PO Box II5, STN R., Montreal. (Quebec) Canada

HELL ON WHEELS — ALPHA PHOZZ & THE HUSTLE, CD Please see the Flashing Astonishers review and multiply times 2. (GG)

Urinine 6808 Madison Dr. Indianapolis, IN 46227

HOSEHEAD - EL CRAPOLA, CD I'm instantly biased against any band that thanks "all da ho's" (sic), then sings at length about needing "a girl to suck my cock." This is the generic poppy punk you'd expect from a band like this — low-fi, bad packaging, worse attitudes, stupid lyrics. Flush. (SM)

Poopypants Records, 9 Lonesomepine Rd., Cumberland, RI 02864

HOSTILE OMISH - ONE HORSE POWER, CD Every month I get at least one thing for review that's abusively stupid. This takes the cake. Hostile Omish dress like Amish people and play Neanderthal punk rock songs, like the one about the girl who's a lesbian and makes the singer mad because she won't suck his dick. Or the one about making a milkshake of squished bugs and feeding it to Ethiopians. Y'know, if I wanted to hear this kind of crap I'd hang out in a junior high school locker room. (SM)

I, ROBOT - I, ROBOT 7" Mostly screamed and some sung vocals over fairly generic punk rock. It's sort of emo-core, I guess. Nothing to hear here, move along people. (DDK)

Goldtooth Records

ILL EASE - CIRCLE LINE TOURS, CD III Ease is fast becoming one of my favorite "bands" that I have reviewed for PP. I say, "bands" in quotes, because I'm not sure if this is a real group or just some sort of a studio project. Either way, it's cool. III Ease create funky, highly textured music that builds each song up layer by layer until you have a some really groovy, indy pop music. Circle Line Tours is actually more coherent than their last release, 'Live at the Gate' and seems more like an actual album, with sort of a travel theme going on throughout. III Ease do what a lot of similar groups fail to do, which is pair artistic experimentation with songs that are actually catchy and well written. Highly recommended. (JK) Swampy 2 East Broadway 4th floor New York, NY 10038

IMPALA — R & B FAVORITES, CD This s a nice collection of Impala songs taken form several different sessions while recording records for the king of hip Estrus Records. Fifteen instrumentals, any of which would make a perfect background to your life. This should have made my best of 1998 list except that I listened to it too late. This is rock and roll this is booze, this is fighting, this is woman being woman, and yes men being men. Pick this one up, grab a cold one, your woman or two and do it Impala style. (EA) Estrus International Bump 'n' Grind Hot Rod Garage Shop Over Cocktails Records

THE IMPS- CAPSIZED/DISEASE NAMED AFTER ME, 7" A power trio of fast paced rock and roll. Something that even your mother could get into and sing a long with. "Disease named after me" is the track with the bite that might infect you. (BC)

Imps P.O. Box 5507, Chico, CA. 95927

INEPT - IMAGES OF BETRAYAL, LP Holy shit. Listening to this record and reading the lyrics made certain words come to mind: intense, serious, brutal, angry, sin-

cere, desperate. I think you can piece together what this sounds like but in case you can't, it's in your face, heavy, screamy hardcore with some (but not too over the top) metal tossed in the mixture. Unlike most bands of this genre though they have a healthy combination of speed and broodiness and can fit more than 6 songs on an LP (try 19). The lyrics cover a wide variety of topics which seem to be mainly personal reactions to observations of fucked up events. Along with the song explanations, they make you feel almost uncomfortable because they are so open, blunt, and brazen - like someone literally pouring her/his heart and soul out in front of you. It will probably be a year old by the time you read this but is still worth tracking down. (KB) Interbang Records, PO Box 3673, Columbus, OH 43210-0674

JIMMY EAT WORLD - S/T, CD Sad, sad indy rock, like you're in a movie breaking up with your significant other, driving around crying. Yep. (AL)

Fueled By Ramen, PO Box 12563, Gainesville, FL. 32604

THE JUDAS FACTOR - BALLADS IN BLUE CHINA, CD+ This is a full-length CD, as well as a Mac and Windows CD-ROM. The music is heavy hardcore with a lot of cool guitar harmonics and noise. Screaming vocals complete the sound. Actually, there are a couple of songs on here that are more mellow and melodic and show that this band has quite a range of styles. The CD-ROM includes a couple of live videos, some video interviews, lyrics to songs, explanations of songs, and more. (MH) Revelation PO Box 5232 Huntington Beach CA 92615

JUNE OF 44 - SOUTHEAST OF BOSTON B/W DEXTERTLY OF LUCK, 7" I'm going to make a wild guess here and say that most Punk Planet readers are probably already familiar with this band. I personally think stuff like this is awful. I remembered being impressed with their musicianship and energy when I saw this band live about 3 years ago but I swear it's a different band. The music on this 7" is grappy artsy "weird" bullshit and typical indie I-can't-really-sing-so-I'll-just-droné-dreamily type vocals that I hate. What happened to the all-instrumental powerful, talented band that was able to win over even a die-hard punk purist like me? I can't even make the reviewer copout statement "but at least they're talented" because it just all sounds like shit to me. (KB) B-Core Disc, PO Box 35221. 08080 Barcelona. Spain

KEVLAR/COBOLT - SPLIT, 7" Kevlar is a dead ringer for later period Jawbox, especially the vocals. They sound a bit like Unwound, too. Cobolt plays a similar style, leaning more towards a slowish indy rockin' sound. Decent. (AL) Communication, Stockholmsv. 9B. 761 43 Norrteije,

THE KIWI WALTZ - THE KIWI WALTZ CD Well, I hate to pan a local act, but this is pretty lame. The back of the CD states, "The Kiwi Waltz dedication to bring back the vibe of a high school sock hop, circa 1955, is demonstrated in this album." Then why does this sound like really bland emo? I don't see any connection. The CD also says that the CD consists of recordings made in

June of 1997, and "For this CD reissue, producer Fred Popolo has added approximately fifteen minutes of never before heard the Kiwi Waltz." So how come my CD is only 15 minutes long? Somebody really screwed up. In any case, it's a relief that this was only 15 minutes long, and not more. Very bad. (DDK)

Divot Records

THE LAWNDARTS - 13 SONGS ABOUT NOTHING CD A rock band from New Jersey. They inhabit a middle ground between rock and punk. Rock with some hardcore influence. Reminds me of The Swinging Utters, but not as good. I found them to be extremely forgettable. (DDK) Lawndaris Records

LAYAWAY PLAN - FORCE OF HABIT, CD Emo is alive and living in Canada. Seriously, Layaway Plan have put together a better than average disc with great sing-along backing vocals and catchy tunes driven by heavy, but melodic, guitar work. (MH)

Smallman Records PO Box 352-905 Corydon Ave Winnepeg MB Canada R3M 3S3

LEFT FOR DEAD - SPLITTING HEADS, CD A CD Discography featuring all of Left For Dead's recorded material. This includes their 7" split with Ochre, their 12" buzzsaw split with Acrid and their Live 12" Split with Chokehold. Furious hardcore with just a tint of metal. Awesome breakdowns that never fail to disappoint, I even find myself bobbing my head at times. Left for Dead have broken up and moved on to conquer bigger things as members of The Swarm. Keep your eyes open. (SY) NO IDEA. P.O. Box 14636, Gainesville, FL 32604

LEGEND OF THE OVERFIEND/LADDERBACK - SPLIT, 7" L.O.T.O give us one song that alternates between soft chimey guitar/singing to distorto guitar/shrieks and growls. Their second song is better, HC with just a touch of metal wankery and even a blast beat part! Ladderback play emo kind of like Hoover. Quiet sung parts and tortured yelling parts. (AL) 706 Harris St., Raleigh, NC. 27607

THE LIZARDS — S/T, 7" This one is good nerdy-poppy punk. Not too poppy, but a touch too nerdy in my book. They were nice musically, fast and aggressive, but the singer went for some weird geek voice. I couldn't get into that. But they have a CD on very small records forthcoming that I am sure a lot of you will get into, and has the chance to be pretty hot. (GG)

Lil Deputy PO Box 7066 Austin TX 78713-7066

LORAXX - CANADA, CD This band reminds me a lot of early 7 Year Bitch, and there is absolutely nothing wrong with that. The vocalist has that angry growly female vocal going on, and the drums, guitar and bass, are kinda plodding and quirky at times, and frantic at others. You gotta love it. (MH)

Loraxx 3950 Lakeshore Dr #2315 Chicago IL 60613

Los Infernos — The Outlaw, 7" Confedrate southern style rock comes from an unlikely source of Alternative Tentacles. Side A could fit in with Estrus favs the Quadrajets and the B-side is an instrumental tune

along the lines of a surf B-side or a Man or Astroman tune. Two quick tunes that have the sound, great recording and enough interest to get me to listen twice and that is hard these days. (EA)

AT PO Box 419092 San Francisco CA 94141

LOSER FRIENDLY - WHEN THINGS BECOME ROUTINE, 7" Anthematic punk rock for the punks. (MD)
1.f. 2060 Lexington Ave. San Mateo, ca 94402

MAN OR ASTROMAN - EEVALC, CD Alright, it's now official: Man or Astroman? are a different band, for better or for worse. With their last full length album, "Made from Technicium" MOAM? showcased a new sound that was much different than their previous punk surf material. They suddenly decided that they would start singing on a lot of their songs, a decision that left many fans a little upset (me included). While "Made from Technicium" was not a terrible album by any means, it certainly wasn't their best. If anything, it showed that Man or Astroman? wasn't a band content with staying the same. Eevaic is a much different, and I would say better album than 'Made from Technicium'. If anything, "Eevaic" is weirder, than Technicium was, featuring more experimental noise and electronic noodling than ever before. While many fans will still be disappointed with MOAM?'s new sound, it cannot be denied that Eevaic is still a very good album. Not perfect, but still very good. Recommended. (JK)

Touch and Go PO box 25520 Chicago, IL 60625

MANISHEVITZ - GRAMMAR BELL AND THE ALL FALL DOWN, CD Rock 'n' roll done old school style with pud-pud beats, drony storyline lyrics, and smooth melodies. Good music for those days when you find yourself driving a stolen truck down a dusty highway. (MD) Jagjaguwar. 1703 N. Maple St., Bloomington, IN 47404

MAO TSE HELEN — S/T, 7" Captain Beefheart-esque, sort of prog-rock, metal tinged, artsy goodness. A must for the jaded punker as well as rocker who is looking for something else. A lot of time went into the music as well as the packaging, I especially like the PhotoBlaster picture. You should buy this. Cheers. (MD) M.T.H. 3458 Grove Ave. Richmond. VA 23221

ME FIRST - SUPERTOUCHY FEELY, CD The only readable text in the liner notes is the quote by Kevin Army. Now that you know what this band sounds like, let me just tell you they are mostly girls. (MD)

THE METALUNAS - X-MINUS-ONE, CD The Metalunas are your classic surf band. Cheezy Space themed cover art, Snippets from old Sci-Fi movies between songs, and lots of organ solos. While this may not be the most original approach to surf music (ok, not original at all) I still love it. These guys are skilled players, have some very catchy songs. Much more Shadowy Men on a Shadowy Planet style than Man or Astroman? style. Nothing new, but still cool. (JK)

American Pop Project. PO box 2271, San Rafael, CA 94912

MIKE AND THE MOLESTERS — $\rm S/T$, 7" The A-side to this one is real good, a rock and roll tragedy. Mike and the Molesters are very lo-fi in the sense that they sound like

they are sing the cheapest second hand instruments and microphones. The thing is that it really works, it works like a god damn charm on a little school girl. The A- side contains "Get Ya Back" and a great cover of the classic "Busy Man" that DMZ made famous in the right circles. The B-side is just that, but the A-side will get enough play to make this a winner to any rock and roll / garage fan out there. (EA) Little Deputy Records

MINUTE MANIFESTO/SHANK - SPLIT 7" Whoa, crazy packaging! I'm quite impressed with the new Minute Manifesto material. They've improved quite a bit. Crazy, chaotic, totally all-over-the-place hardcore that whizzes by your ears at a million mph. The song explanations are longer than the lyrics. You know you love it. They have a near musical genius on drums as well. Shank bring us some fast as hell 90s hardcore with blast beats and interesting breakdowns and slow moments. Energetic and powerful with great songs like "Dead Bodies are So Cool" about the cliched and dehumanizing use of dead bodies on record covers. They've got some serious attitude, oftentimes pointing the finger at themselves. A great little insert with 2 heartfelt, sarcastic, funny, and thought-provoking essays is included. This seems to be an Ebola (UK) family record - former vocalist in MM, bassist in Shank, and current vocalist doing the label duties. As much as they all seem to view putting out punk records as ultimately futile, this 7" is a product of much labor and love from really sincere and dedicated folks in the UK scene. Support! (KB) Enslaved, PO Box 169, Forster Ct., Bradford, W. Yorkshire, BD7 1YS, England

MOLOKO PLUS- THE CARELESS YEARS..., CD Moloko is a young punk band that has lots of gang vocals, songs about girls, and catchy titles like "I wanna be a punk, but it cost too much." Many people will like this, but for me it just doesn't cut through the 100 hundred bands I have to review this time around. Maybe I am getting too old and jaded for this. (BC)

M.P. 208 West Grand, Carterville, IL. 62918

 $MR.\ YUCK - WARM,\ CD$ I agree, but lets get passed the formalities. (MD)

A-attack 3122 Colony Crossing, Sugar Land TX. 77479

NAKED AGGRESSION — MARCH ALONG, CD MEMO TO BAND: You're right, this is my nightmare. Poorly recorded, hollow sound, weak musically. I know some people are into this band, but I have a feeling this is not their best recording. HC with female vocals. Cover of Kids in America. (GG)

Broken Rekids PO Box 460402 SF. CA 94146-0402

NEMA - BRING OUR CURSES HOME, LP If you've heard of Nema before you should already have this. If not, be prepared for an onslaught of evil, dark-sounding heavy-ass music. I can't really say punk or hardcore (thought the influences and roots are clear) or metal. Just fucking brutal, almost beautiful, masterfully-crafted songs. Intricate riffing, occasional double bass, a variety of different vocal styles, the most popular being the gritty growl of agony and anger. Pessimistic anti-everything lyrics with occasional words like "fodder" and "covetous". They do a great cover of Citizen's

MUSIC

Arrest's "Number". Included is a beautifully printed booklet which has a couple of uncredited photos by yours truly (ha ha Jeff, just wanted to taunt and tease you a little more). Supposedly they'll be writing and recording new material this summer. We'll see if they can top this masterpiece. (KB) Sound Pollution, PO Box 17742, Covington, KY 41017)

NEUROSIS — TIMES OF GRACE, CD There are two types of people in this world. There are those who know that Neurosis has never made a less then flawless record, and all the rest are the dipshits. A Neurosis record recorded by Steve Albini, What could be better? You know what to expect. (SY)

Relapse Records. PO Box 251, Millersville, PA 17551

New American Mob - Liberty, CD Anthemic punk rock with emphasis on rock. Some songs reminded me of a less snotty, less "77," more ROCK version of The Stitches. (AL) Diskoid, 1935C Friendship Dr., El Cajon, CA. 92020

No Motty - and the sadness prevails..., CD If Blink 182 was a bit depressed in the studio they might sound like this. (MD)

Vagrant 2118 Wilshire Blvd. #361, Santa Monica, CA 90403

NOAM CHOMSKY - PROPAGANDA AND CONTROL OF THE PUBLIC MIND, DOUBLE CD 112 minutes, spanning two CDs of a monologue that Chomsky did in Cambridge, MA in 1997. Lots of thought provoking political stuff here, but I find it hard to listen to the whole thing at once. I like my politics in the written form, as I find that I'm able to understand concepts and digest information in a better fashion. Fortunately, the thing is separated in 36 tracks on specific topics, so I can pick and choose from the things that interest me. Political junkies will dig this. (MH) AK Press PO Box 40682 SF CA 94140-0682

OUSIA - S/T, 7" Sort of emo styled hardcore. I liked the lack of heavy distortion on the guitars, it makes it easier to hear the sometimes droning, sometimes melodic interplay between bass and guitar parts. Shouted, somewhat fuzzy yox, 3 songs. (AL)

Noise Pollution, PO Box 72189. Louisville, KY. 40272.

PAINTBOX — S/T, 7" Has a 1977 punk feel to it. Dead Boys perhaps? Side A starts out subtle and then surprises me by kicking into some thrash not unlike the styling of Gauze. The B-Side is straightforward with great harmonizing guitars very much in a Dead Boys style. All lyrics are in Japanese. I didn't get a cover to this record so it took some research to find out what it was. H.G. Fact you owe me some packaging! Great record. (SY)

H.G. Fact c/o Tadashi Satoh, 401 Hongo-M, 2-36-2 Yayoi-Cho, Nakano, Tokyo, 164-0013, JAPAN

THE PALAXY TRACKS - THE FAMILY TREE / IF I WERE A JULIE LONDON, 7" A moody indie-rock record. Some pretty cool guitar work here, and a singer that is actually able to sing without sounding like a dweeb. Pretty good for when you are in a down sorta mood. (MH) Grey Flat Records PO Box 650018 Austin TX 78765

PAUL NEWMAN - TWISTWORTHY NUMBER SEVEN, CD 3 songs, 2 of which are poppy-emo instrumentals that pleased my friend who is into such forms.

The middle track is the more screamy emo that I guess you'd expect from Ebullition, but I am no emo expert. Overall though, it comes across as pretty mature stuff, worth picking up. It really is a strange combo, and strange that it has only 3 songs. Why make that? (GG) Twistworthy Records PO Box 4491 Austin, TX 78765

PAWNS - YOU TALK OF SACRIFICE...HE KNEW THE MEANING OF SACRIFICE CD An aggressive punk/hardcore band from Chico, California. They are heavy, and, I found, a bit depressing. The lyrics are political, and their heart is in the right place. Anti-police, anti-corporate, anti-gun, and so on. It's short - eight songs in under 15 minutes. It comes with a nice fold out poster of a soldier hanging dead over barbed wire, referencing the album title. They do a lot of things right, but over all, the music just didn't grab me. (DDK)

Bad Monkey Records

Tooth & Nail Records

PEP SQUAD - YREKA BAKERY CD As Marx said, religion is the opiate of the masses. Of course, Tooth & Nail - a label which keeps trying to deny it is a Christian label - is dealing some over-the-counter opiates. This particular band keeps it to a relative minimum, but it's enough to bug the crap out of me. They thank "Our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ" in the liner notes and sing one song explicitly about righteous faith in Jesus saving them on judgment day. Too bad this reviewer is an atheist raised Jewish. I've always resented how everyone in the United States assumes you celebrate Christmas - let alone the people who believe that you need to be "saved," Well, if these kids could get past their own hallucinatory belief in myths, then they might be a decent pop band with a rock edge. Musically, they remind me of the Flaming Lips. Lyrically, they've got a way to go. Even disregarding the Christian song, the lyrics are unsophisticated. I can say this, the CD comes nicely packaged. I guess Jesus likes high quality merchandise. But since he was lewish. I wonder if he paid retail... (DDK)

PINHEAD GUNPOWDER — SHOOT THE MOON, CDEP This seven song CD reminds me that even though Green Day hit it big and everyone hated them now, Billie can write catchy songs that all don't sound exactly the same. I kinda have kept up with this side project that also members from Fuel , Aaron Cometbus and such in it. I think that Pinhead Gunpowder have great tunes because there is no pressure and that just put stuff out whenever on whatever labels. A hidden treasure form the main populace. (EA)

Adeline 5337 College Ave. #318 Oakland CA 94618

PROHASKA — $\rm S/T$, 7" Cool packaging, reminiscent of a cigarette package or something, but with photos of cool afro'd soccer players. Musically, the band commits a big no-no. Screamy emo with a very flat recording. Bad move — music needs the right mix or it does not work. Emo loses all emotion when it sounds like this. (GG)

Underground Industries Hambergstr 12.37 124 Rosdorf Germany PROPAGANDHI - WHERE QUANTITY IS JOB #1, CD This is a collection of unreleased demos, live stuff, and stuff that should have never seen the light of day. Actually, this is better than one might expect. You can hear the band being stupid at live shows and get a taste of the raw recordings that you haven't heard. Not only for fans, anybody into melodic punk should enjoy this release. (MH) g-7 Welcoming Committee Records Box 3-905 Corydon Winnipeg MB R3M 3S3 Canada

THE QUEERS- LATER DAYS AND BETTER LAYS, CD This band The Queers plays a snotty—(just kidding) we all know who the hell they are and how they sound. So let me get to the material on this disc. Way back in 1991 The Queers laid down some tracks in the studio but never released them on disc. They did it so Weasel could hear the band. 21 tracks of pre-"Love Songs..." era that pack a nice punch. You have to get it to complete your Queers collection. It's law ya' know. (BC) Lookout P.O. Box 11374 Berkeley, CA. 94712-2374

QUINTRON — THESE HANDS OF MINE, CD Oh! Quintron the one man army equipped with an organ and ten tons of soul. One could go on about the importance of you owning some Quintron in your collection, but if you got soul – Jim Cole. Then You outta already be hip to the organ grinding, wild outrage of music that Mr. Quintorn gives you. (EA)

Rhinestone Records / Skin Graft Records

No More Life Records

RACOR - MAYBE YOU'RE RIGHT... CD An Australian hardcore band. Six songs in about fourteen minutes. Very dark and heavy, with metal influence. They would fit well on Victory Records. Unfortunately, there's nothing to make this stand-out. I've heard too many bands who sound just like them. (DDK)

RATOS DE PORAO - CARNICERIA TROPICAL, CD Never thought I'd see the label started by the Dead Kennedy's putting out a band that makes corporate endorsements on the back of its CD cover. But here they are, endorsing Pearl Drums, Black Flys sunglasses, Vic Firth drum sticks and a few other companies. Huh. Anyway, the music here doesn't sound very corporate—it's brutal grindcore stuff, with guttural vocals belching out lyrics that sound like "Ruff. Ruff-ruff. Ruff-ruff-ruff-raw!" All the song names are in Spanish, and I'm assuming the lyrics are, too. (They could be singing in Klingon and there's still no way to understand them.) Some definite metal influences here, making the music sound meaner, which is good. In fact, this whole CD is pretty good. Very angry. And there's even scratching in a song. (SM)

Alternative Tentacles, PO Box 419092, San Francisco, CA 94141-9092

THE RAY GRADYS - THE TABLES NEED TURNED CD From North Carolina, a three piece oi-oi hardcore album with a smattering of stripped down (almost acoustic) moments. The recording sounds a bit muddy. Politically, the lyrics are cool (mostly). Angry and frustrated with the state of society, recognizing corporate and government control. Musically, they are not bad. I like the way they contrast the

spare moments with the thrash, but other than that, they don't do anything new to keep my attention. (DDK)

Grady Core Records

REAL ESTATE FRAUD- IT'S FUNNY CAUSE IT'S TRUE, 7" Some goofy ass Euro-like vocals going on here. The music is just your average punk stuff, but them vocals are a wacky and refreshing listen, after you are forced to review over 20 slabs of music in 3 short days! (BC) Nice and Neat Records P.O. Box 14177 Minneapolis, MN. 55414

THE RED SCARE — A WORLD ABOUT HIGH FIDELITY, 7" A really appreciate bands that name their singles, instead of having to put the s/t logo or naming it after the A-side. High Fidelity is anything but, and I didn't read the promo sheet and I am sure I am way out of the "emo" loop but if this doesn't have members of the 1.6 Band then call me silly. you get that slappy bass sound, the cough medicine vocals and they Marshall sound. I like this and I haven't liked an "emo" single in a long time (see 1.6 Band, Born Against, etc.) so this is a welcome change to my rock 'n' roll ears. This is darn good, but if you read Punk Planet you are already saying, "duh, where the hell have you been?" (see buried under a huge stack of crap singles and ashtray material CD's). (EA) Paralogy PO Box 14253 Albany, NY 12212

REDSUN, CD Pretty rockin' punk with a hardcore edge. Yep, you can bob your head to it, as well as shake your fist. (MD)
Noise Pollution, PO box 72189 Lousiville, Kentucky
40272

THE ROSWELLS - S/T, 7"

Super hi energy pop punk that stands a cut above the rest. Fun, catchy, good production, jump up and down! \$3 PPD. (AL)

Microcosm, 7741 Ohio St., Mentor, OH. 44060-4850

RUNNIN' RIOT - RECLAIM THE STREETS, CD These Belfast, Ireland boys play good traditional streetpunk/oi tunes: uptempo music, gruff shouted vocals, catchy sing along choruses complete with shouted "ois!" (AL)

Received of Woodlands Ave. Dun Larchire Co. Dublin.

Rejected, 9 Woodlands Ave., Dun Lagohire, Co. Dublin, Ireland

RUTH'S HAT - I DON'T WANNA FALL IN LOVE, 7" Ruth's Hat play buzzsaw punk rock with poppy melodies and sing-a-long backing vocals. Unfortunately, the muddy production on this doesn't showcase the band at it's best, but songs like Baywatch Nights, and a cover of Dream Lover make this a winner. (MH) SPG Records PO Box 150761 San Rafael GA 94915

SAETIA - S/T, CD Excellent Emo Hardcore in the Fingerprint vein. Songs are neatly structured and balanced with distortion guitar/screamed vocals and clean channel pretty guitar/sung vocals. Hand screened packaging and nice booklet round out this quality release. \$6 PPD. (AL) Mountain. PO Box 220320, Greenpoint P.O..

Brooklyn, NY, 11222

SAX9 - MY DUMB COUSIN 7" Another hardcore band. They don't totally suck or anything; they are kinda fun...|'m sure all their friends like the band. It's just that

among the thousands of hardcore bands already living and breathing on this planet, you have to do something damn special to be worth listening to. I don't dislike Sax9, it's just that I've got plenty to listen to I like better. (DDK) Second Harvest Records

 $\begin{array}{lll} \mbox{SCHRASJ} - \mbox{EP, 7" Makes Tsunami (the band) sound} \\ \mbox{like Spazz. (EA)} \end{array}$

Rocket Racer

SEAN NA NA/LUCKY JEREMY - SPLIT, 7" Both bands play one melodic indy pop song each. (AL) Heart of a Champion, PO Box 3861, Minneapolis, MN. 55403

SEAN NA NA (WITH BABY BLUE AND JEFF GUNTZEL) — S/T, 7" First of all, I'm not sure exactly what's going on with the bands here. Sean Tillman plays and sings on both songs, with different musicians on both. So I guess that's Sean Na Na. Anyway, The first song is a slow, pleasant indie number, sparse on the music, with engaging vocals sung well. The second song is slower, more sparse, and a bit less happy sounding than the first. A night song, maybe. I really like this record, partly because I can't think of anything to compare it to. (SM) Bread Machine Records, no address given.

SECRET HATE/DAS KLOWN SPLIT 7" Two punk bands from California: Secret Hate is from Costa Mesa and Das Klown from Long Beach. Secret Hate makes some kick ass, aggressive punk rock. The one song featured here is very hard driving, noisy, and includes some unusually cool guitar screeches. Das Klown on the other hand, is more typical hardcore. They aren't bad, they just don't do anything very interesting. I'd say this was almost worth the price for the Secret Hate song alone. Too bad it's not a Secret Hate solo 7". (DDK)

SHAKE RAY TURBINE - THE SAUCE OF SOLUTION CD If this doesn't get you riled up, then you must call the morgue your home. Punk rock that doesn't forget it grew out of rock 'n roll. That is to say, unlike so many punk rock albums where every song sounds the same, this CDs got levels and variety! Imagine the novelty of that. Songs build tension before releasing in raging crescendos. They use quieter moments to contrast the peaks, giving them even more impact. There is definitely an element of math rock in the dynamic shifts and complexity, but thanks to the gritty singer and overall tone, it feels more like really smart punk rock to me. If you like Shellac, you'll probably dig this, too. Highly recommended. (DDK)

SHANTY RD. - MAIDER B/W FOR MEMBERS ONLY, 7" Very slow angsty indie rock with kind of unusual drum timing. Er, make that unusual timing in general. It doesn't seem as tight as it should be for this kind of music and some of the timing and rhythm changes seem a bit awkward. The band Chisel comes to mind at times; otherwise its pretty typical math rock/emo. No insert = lame. (KB) Marry Me. PO Box 35395, 08080 Barcelona, Spain

SHUGGIE - s/T, CD If the Eagles children grew up locked in a hermetically sealed room where they could read about punk rock but only listen to the Eagles, this would be their band. (MD)

Headhunter/Cargo 4901-906 Morena Boulevard, San Diego, CA 92117-3432

 $Shyster-Cold\ Weather,\ 7"\ They\ play\ both$ slow and fast, and the singer seems like he has a lot on his mind. And they play punk. (MD)

Firmament Records, PO Box 420484

THE SISSIES — GEOGRAPHY, CD Take two parts riot grrl band and mix it with about four parts pop punk band — add a decent sense of humor and some engaging personality — and you've baked yourself The Sissies. This is a three-piece with two girl vocalists that plays pleasingly goofy punk rock. Nice DIY packaging, too. (SM)

Plan-It-X Records, 5810 W. Willis Rd., Georgetown, IN 47122

THE SLAGS - NEVER SURRENDER, 7" Two songs from this Santa Rosa band. Straight-ahead 4-chord punk with shades of Social Distortion. The A-side has a forgettable generic punk sound with distorted vocals. However, the band really shines on the B-side, which has a better hook than Side A, and shows a more developed sound. (MH) Red Star Records PO Box 1204 Glen Ellen CA 95442

THE SNATCHERS — S/T, 7" Pretty tame rock/punk. Lots of singalongs, and judicious piano and harmonica use. Typical songs, "she holds tight," etc. OK (GG) Woo-Da-Loo Audio 7110 W. 20th Ave., Suite 204 Lakewood, CO 80215

SOLID EYE - FRUITS OF AUTOMATION CD Squiggly, squeaky, bleepy, bloopy electronica. A bit eerie. Like a bunch of devices on the bridge of the Starship Enterprise fed through a frequency modulator. Could be the soundtrack for the movie Metropolis. It's okay, if you're into that shit. (DDK)

SONGS FOR EMMA ~ 11.12.98, CD This kinda reminds me off Billy Bragg meets Lou Reed meets a melodic punk band doing power ballads. Most of this stuff is medium tempo with very gruff vocals and melodic bass and guitars. This won't be popular with a lot of the punky kids, but it's still a great listen for us old farts. (MH)

Broken Rekids PO Box 460402 SF CA 94146-0402

SOUNDS OF THE INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT RESTROOMS, 7" Have you ever wondered what it sounds like in the bathroom of the Kimpo International Airport in Seoul, South Korea? Me neither, but that shouldn't stop you from enjoying this newest edition to the "Sounds of" series. Previous entries in the series include: Sounds of American Fast Food Restaurants, and sounds of San Francisco Adult Bookstores. Along with featuring actual sounds from international airport bathrooms, (toilet flushing, echos) there is also a short educational history before each bathroom, and it's even translated into Esperanto on the inside cover. It doesn't get much better than that! (JK)

Planet Pimp PO box 411193 San Francisco, CA 94141-1193

MUSIC ///

THE SPACE COWBOYS — STRIPTEASE, 7" Three piece out of Sweden, released in Australia sounding like they were from the Midwest. A big time heads up to the new Bomb Turks and particularly the ripped off guitar bends on "Sonic Soul". Don't get me wrong this is a keeper and its nice to here a band sound like the first NBT record since they don't anymore. Four songs laid to wax including a questionable cover of "Sonic Reducer (point?). All of this including the over done Bettie Page pic on the cover says "buy me", but why does a hip rock and roll band let a picture of a kid in fat pans wearing a NOFX shirt get put on the label of their 7", seriously that alone can make me hat the Space Cowboys. (EA)

Mondo Bizarro Records PO Box 18, Modbury North, SA 5092 Australia

SPIRIT - IN MEMORY OF ..., 7" Bravo to this record, a total throwback to the early 1990s emo scene by a band from Australia. The ingredients for good honest hardcore are all here — the strained screaming vocals, the pretty guitars parts bursting into angst-filled heavy parts. The packaging on this record, a split label release, is also fantastic — handmade paper covers, with cool inserts. And the vinyl is thick as hell. Thumbs up. (SM) Penfold Records. PO Box 174. Blackwood, SA 5051, Australia, OR Spiral Objective, PO Box 126, Oakland Park, SA 5046, Australia

SPOON - ANTICIPATION 7" Two songs from a band from Austin, Texas. The first song sounds like they are Counting Crows wanna be's. The second song sounds like not much of anything. This is a serious waste of vinyl. Hey, isn't there a vinyl shortage or something? Sometimes I wish there was. (DDK)

STICKLER- EVERYBODY'S PUNK ROCK Now, 7 Boy oh boy, everyone is punk now. Even my dentist has a green mohawk. And my grandma just got her eye pierced. But anyway, this band is the punk basics. But that ain't a bad thing at all. With a little more steam, they could give the New Bomb Turks a run for their rock and roll money. (BC) Hell Bent for Leather Records P.O. Box 89224. Sioux Falls. SD. 57109

STRIKING IRWIN - THE TWELVE STEP PROGRAM, 7" Your basic, run of the mill hardcore band. (MD)
S.I. PO Box 627, Madison, WI 53701

SUPERMAN CURL — SOUNDCHECK, CD Pop. Keyboards/organ(!) Well played for the most part. The pictures look old; I'd guess these guys have been around for a while, dig old rock and roll, and write some nice songs — not great though. Why does this kind of music get to PP though? No one who reviews for PP would buy this. At least, I don't think so. But they seem to claim to be punks. I wouldn't have guessed that. Weird. (GG) Amp 92 Kenilworth Ave So. Hamilton Ont., CA L8K 2S9

SWING SET - CD Mostly mid tempo pop rock with melodies and vocals reminiscent of your faves Green Day, 4 Songs, (AL)

Swing Set, Box 1267, Almonte, Ontario, KOA IAO, Canada

TALK Is POISON / DEATHREAT — SPLIT, 7" For all you suckers who bought the Talk Is Poison CD instead of the 7", good things come to those who are faithful to vinyl. The four songs that were extra on the CD are now available here, plus you get 5 tunes from Deathreat. Talk Is Poison play anger-filled hardcore reminiscent of Negative Approach. Did you dismiss Deathreat as a mere His Hero Is Gone side project? Let them stand on their own because the stuff is awesome early 80's hardcore that belongs in a skateboard shaped record cover. (SY)

Prank! PO Box 410892, San Francisco, CA 94141-0892

TEEN IDOLS- PUCKER UP!, CD Tennessee has an important part in music. The resting-place of Elvis, the childhood homes of Tina Turner, Roy Orbison, and all of the great Country Music History. So coming from the "Vol" state, one can have a lot of weight on its shoulders. But the Teen Idols seem to have no problem rocking out and making their own Tennessee history. Pucker Up is a great slab of upbeat rock and roll. Simply out 14 tracks of great melodies and harmonies. (Check out "20 Below" for instance) This is a band that deserves everything good that they get. Phillip is one of the nicest guys I have ever met on the road. I hope that this record sells a million copies for them. So everyone go out and get it. And is it me or does Heather get better looking every day. Wow! And kudos for being on Honest Dons, A label that still ACTUALLY responds to bands that send them demos. (BC)

Honest Don's P.O. Box 192027 San Francisco, CA. 94119-2027

THROWAWAY GENERATION/ THE ZILLIONAIRES — S/T, 7" Throwaway Generation are the kind of punk band that snarls and wears spikes. They play mid-tempo punk tunes with growled vocals and people yelling during choruses, but manage to stay melodic and catchy. The Zillionaires are in the same vein, but a little more gruff and a bit less catchy. More like an old street punk band. Not a bad record for those punkers who might still have mohawks. (SM) Unity Squad Records, 516 East Winmington Ave.. Salt Lake City, UT 84106-1419

THROWAWAY GENERATION - ALIVE IN THE STREETS OF AMERICAN DECAY CD An enjoyable skate/hardcore band which appears to be from Utah. Glad there are people other than Mormons in Utah. Throwaway Generation hits you with some tasty hooks and fist pumpin' punk anthems. If I had to pick a band they remind me of, it's the now defunct Mushuganahs. Lyrically, nothing to write home about, but I found myself crankin' this loud, over and over. It's well produced - they're aren't too clean, and they aren't too muddy. I like it. (DDK) Unity Squad Records

TORTOISE/THE Ex - IN THE FISHTANK, CD I picked this up because I thought it was a new Tortoise album, which it is kind of, but not really. For this little experiment, Tortoise are teamed up with The Ex, a band who I'm not familiar with and not sure I really like very much. As far as I can tell, "In the Fishtank" is part of a series of records

Konkurrent has put together that team up bands different, yet similar styles. The result of this pairing is a mixed bag. The songs on here are more art noise experiments than actual songs, which can be good or bad depending on where your tastes lie. I found this album to be a pretty interesting experiment, but not much else. I would only recommended this for hardcore fans of Torotise or The Ex. (JK) Touch and Go Records. Inc PO box 25520, Chicago IL 60625

TRI-DANIELSON - TRI DANIELSON (OMEGA), CD I had heard a lot about this band awhile back, but I was kind of turned off by them being on Tooth and Nail so I never checked them out. After finally listening to this album, all I can say is, "weird". This band has a very strange charm about them, and while they are on a Christian label, any preaching is very subliminal. These guys seem more like some kind of weird cult than a Christian rock band. The singer sounds like a mixture of Frank Black and Jad Fair, with somebody else I can't quite place thrown in. In a way I kind of respect Tooth and Nail for putting out something this weird. Even so, I'm don't think I would recommend this, but if some day a comet comes to pick these guys back up, I wouldn't be suprised. (JK) Tooth and Nail Records, PO box 12698, Seattle WA 98111-4698

TUB - COFFEE TEA SODA POP PEE, CD Duotang with a Smashing Pumpkins edge. (MD)
Centipede Records 6245 Santa Monica Blvd., LA, CA 90038

TURMOIL - THE PROCESS OF, CD Turmoil blast away with a very Deadguy sort of sound. It's that style of hardcore in which bands compete to see how angry the vocals can be, how much the guitars can chugga-chugga, and how much pounding the drummer can pull off. Turmoil are doing pretty well in the competition. The songs are tight and technical, angry and energetic. And fortunately, most of the songs are around three minutes long — avoiding the pitfall this genre frequently faces: rock operas. I would've liked to have had a lyric sheet, but this is good — not as good as Deadguy or Cave †n, but very good. (SM)

Century Media Records, 1453-A 14th St.. #324. Santa Monica, CA 90404

UK SUBS - LIVE IN THE WARZONE, CD What can I say? It's the Subs, playing a mix of their tunes live in Ireland. If you dig them you'll dig this. (AL)

Rejected, 9 Woodlands Ave, Dun Lagohire, Co. Dublin, Ireland

UNJUST - ...OF LOVE AND SPILLED BLOOD...
CD Very metallic hardcore that metalheads would not hesitate to embrace. Uhmm...yeah, these guys are pretty pissed off. There are a couple of nice moments here, but otherwise these songs are indistinguishable. I don't really like too many hardcore bands that lean heavily into metal except Snapcase. I'll pass. (DDK)
Permanent Records

THE UNKNOWN - STILL UNKNOWN, CD This four-boy band plays a happy, upbeat brand of pop punk, reminding me very much of Doc Hopper. Infectious songs about relationships and playing in bands and other fun

stuff. The music is pretty solid and the singers do on OK job. It's no huge departure from the formula lots of these bands follow — but these guys do it well. (SM)
Jifi Pop Records, PO Box 110361, Cleveland, OH 44111

UNRUH — MISERY STRENGTHENED FAITH, LP A band I have heard much about and even seen some tures. I have high expectations and this meets all of them. Jack Kevorkian inspires the cover art and is a treat. Musically, Unruh is abrasive and the metal hooks are unique. Thrashy with a tendency to go into blast mode. The vocals are on the Rorschach tip with just a little less gasoline. 10 songs about pain, destruction, and truth. More clever then power violence. (SY) King of The Monsters, c/o Unruh, PO Box 357, Tempe, AZ 85280

THE UNSUSPECTING PUBLIC - MONTICELLO 7"
The singer is harsh and grating. The hardcore is kinda tinny. Five songs. I found them to be rather annoying. I think I was the unsuspecting public who had to listen to this. C'est la vie. (DDK)
Spoiled Records

URBAN LEGENDS - S/T, CD A moody indie-rock CD. Melodic and mellow most of the time, this occasionally kicks into some powerful dynamic rocknroll. Actually, this reminds of Built to Spill mixed with Superchunk. Some pretty good melodic guitar leads, and nice low end make this enjoyable and worthwhile. (MH)

AudioInformationPhenomena 1625 Oakwood Dr. San

WATER CLOSET - TIME IS COOL, CD Very melodic punk rock from Japan with mixed male and female vocals. The two guitars play off of each other very well, and solid drumming and bass keep things together. Good stuff. (MH) Broken Rekids PO Box 460402 SF CA 94146-0402

Mateo CA 94403

WESTON/ DOC HOPPER- THE STEPCHILDREN OF ROCK, CD This is a split live c.d. Weston was recorded 4-8-97 and they do 16 tracks of their best stuff. And Doc hopper was recorded 5-28-97 and they do a total of 13 tunes. Both of these bands have been through a lot and have always kept the rock alive. This c.d. is was a great idea to chronicle these two bands at their peak. (BC) Go Kart P.O. Box 20 prince St. Station, NYC. NY 10012

THE WHISKEY SOURNOTES — GOLD VOL. II, CD This is weird. Lounge style singing, but rough sounding. Each song has different hokey musical accompaniment — one song has what sounds like a ukulele, but I don't know if that's what it is. A lot of the songs have obscene lyrics. I would almost guarantee the guy sings this stuff with a mixed drink in hand. (GG)

Pervertidora Records PO Box 192350 SF. CA 94119

WYLD STALLYNZ – JEREMIAH, 7" 8-songs worth of raging high school hardcore. They, like many younger punks, have politically incorrect lyrics just for the sake of pissing people off, but they'll probably grow out of it. The music rages. Screaming hardcore with a fun, DIY attitude. One song even clocks in at 9 seconds. (MH) Middle Man 719 E. St. Clair Indianapolis IN 46204

V/A- 5 YEARS OF PANDEMONIUM, CD This is a sampler of a shit load of French bands (and a few from the U.S.) on the Pandemonium label. Bands like Unsane, Hint, Condense, and God is my Co-Pilot belt out some aggressive shit here. There is a lot of strange music that doesn't pack a punch, but when it's good it's real good. (BC)

Pandemonium Rdz. c/o/ Kinetic Vibes B.P. 64, 13192 Marseille Cx. 20 France

V/A – BRIGTHON CRAWL, 7" Compilation single featuring: Gilded Lil., Crest, Mellow and Bette Davis and the Balconettes. The Gilded Lil have the high school riot girl sound going on with a weird slide guitar that adds something new. The Crest basically could be a more radio friendly Sebadoh again with a slide guitar (what the hell is going on!). Mellow are just that, simole. Finally, Bette Davis & the Balconettes pull off the number one song that directly rips off "Have Love, Will Travel" (hide your head in a god damn hole if you don't know that song) with a tune called "Big Pussy Sounds" that is a raunchy almost Headcoatees style thing. Dig this single that was released as part of a music festival, its different and its got the big English smile too. (EA) Melting Vinyl PO Box 2927 Brighton BNI 3SX

V/A - DESTROYING SOUTHERN TRADITION, 7" A 4 song compilation that showcases bands from the Southern parts of the United States. Featured on this platter are Deathreat, Equity, Damad, and Suppression. All bands put forth great songs. The Suppression song dates back four years ago and its a reminder of how much I loved Suppression before they got involved in all this noise nonsense. A compilation that is good from start to finish. (SY) At A Loss, C/o PO box 55462, Atlanta, GA 30308

V/A – GOT A MINUTE, CD A topnotch CD of mostly unknown bands, all doing relatively short songs. 44 songs on this CD, and not a single one sucks. Styles range from straight-ahead hardcore to punk, pop-punk, and a few other styles. Best known bands on here are Discount, Egghead, and Operation: Cliff Clavin, but this is one of the best comps of unknown bands I've ever run across. (MH) Microcosm 7741 Ohio St. Mentor OH 44060-4850

V/A- HOT CURLY WEENIE VOL. 2, CD Quincy Punks, The Crumbs, Les Turds, Dwarves, and Furious George are just a few of the many punk-ass bands on this well needed comp. With a retail price of around 4 bucks, do yourself a favor and lay off a new Star Wars toy and use that money to get this. Make me proud of you for once. Just fucking once ok! (BC)

Recess Records P.O. Box 1112 Torrance, CA. 90505

V/A IDIOMES - UME COMPILATION EUROPÉENE, CD First off, this label is totally solid and I like almost everything I've heard from it. This is a great comp with a wide variety of musical styles and a sound concept behind it: language. Most communication within the punk scene, as Cristophe says in the intro, is in English. Paraphrasing him, this is a result of US cultural imperialism and is a matter that should be examined and questioned. Straight up! Anyway, onto the music. On this disc (creatively packaged, I might add) we have Manface (Austria), Rubbish Heap (Belgium), Intervenzione (Portugal), Man in the

Shadow (Slovenia), By All Means (Italy), Catweazle (Netherlands), Degarne (Germany), D'Rotzbouwen (Luxembourg), E-150 (Spain), Radical Noise (Turkey), Jean Seberg (France), Stalingrad (England), and Brent Barn (Norway). I can't describe every band but the 2 standouts for me are: Intervenzione who play catchy, fast, simple melodic hardcore with cool female vocals. This song made me go out and buy their 7". E-150 smack us upside the head with 3 merciless hardcore blasts (see reviews of their 7"s elsewhere in this issue). Their best song (that's saying a lot) "Yo, Y Yo Mism@" ("Me and Myself") is on this CD. Expand your horizons, support the international DIY hardcore scene, and get this CD! (KB) Stonehenge Christophe Mora, 21 Rue des Brosses, 78200 Magnanville, France

V/A – OF THINGS TO COME, CD This comp is the soundtrack to a snowboarding film. If that doesn't turn you off, there's some good music to be heard here. All the bands play that brawny, loud melodic punk stuff. Dillinger Four starts off the comp and scores the best track. The other bands are Anti-Flag, Supersuckers, Errortype: 11, Good Riddance, Pinhead Circus, Hatebreed, Bouncing Souls, Swingin' Utters, H2O, Pegboy, Pezz, Voodoo Glow Skulls and Zeke. (SM) BYO, PO Box 67A64, Los Angeles, CA 90067

V/A- SERIAL KILLER, CD Well, after drooling over the cover for an hour I put it in and played it. Lots of punk heavy hitters like 88 fingers Louie, Rhythm Collision, and No Use for a Name contribute to this here comp. Seems like most of this material is taken from their records (next year I hear there is going to be a law passed where only un-released songs can be on comps). But if you want to check out some bands with out getting all their records then this may be for you. Next time also thank the models in you little "thank you list" as they work just as hard as the bands (just trying hard to get in with the gals). (BC) Fearless Records 13772 Goldenwest St. "545. Westminster, CA. 92683

V/A – SKINS AND PINS, CD This CD serves as a pretty basic and credible modern oi/street punk sampler. All the bands you'd want to see – Ducky Boys, Dropkick Murphys, Randumbs, Bodies, Oxymoron, etc. 28 all together. (GG)
Available from GMM records: www.gmm.com

V/A - SWING THIS BABY! VOL. 2, CD Embracing nothing more than empty pop kitche nostalgia, the current swing revival going on in our nation is just another example of mainstream America taking a form of music and lifestyle that was once vital and meaningful, and turning it into pointless fluff. Cigars, Martini's, Zoot Suits, it's all a cliche load of crap, and that doesn't even begin to talk about the music. "Swing this Baby!" this is a prime example of this, featuring fifteen bands who all sound like they are competing for a spot in the newest Gap commercial. This even opens with The Crescent City Maulers doing a cover of "Jump Jive and Wail," a song that if it wasn't already tamished enough by Brian Setzer, has now been sufficiently ruined forever. If you want swing, go buy some Cab Calloway and leave this shit in the bargain bin where it belongs. (JK)

Slimstyle Records, 1540 Broadway, New York, NY 10036



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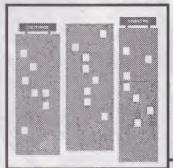
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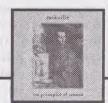
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Sackville "The Principles of Science"

Modernist pop with damaged roots. Five sublime songs from this Montreal band. Both formats in cardstock jack-

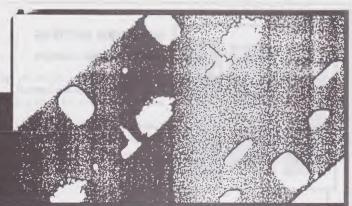


Do Make Say Think "s/t"

"Do Make Say Think is at the top of my 'must see live' list"; the Toronto outfit's self-titled debut is edgy, Krautrockin' hypnosis, equal parts extended guitar instrumentals and synth-fueled ambient drones." Fred Mills, Magnet

PLASTIC





kay, I've never written a negative review here before. Why bother when there's so much cool stuff out there? But I just saw a movie that I hated so much that I just had to rant. SLC Punk sucks! The reason I hate this film is because it uses all this "punk with cred" promotion to flaunt a movie that is really conservative and pro-corporate. The soundtrack you can buy has the Dead Kennedys, the Ramones, the Stooges, Exploited and Generation X, not to mention Adam Ant and Blondie. There's even a Minor Threat song in the film itselffrom a "marketing" perspective it seems like a totally cool punk film. I was excited to see it until I actually did.

After I saw it, I was complaining about it to a friend of mine who works in a great zine store in Chicago, Quimby's, who was like, "We just got the comic book in of that film." Someone from L.A. who called me for advice about film making told me, "I just got a promo of the soundtrack!" Give me a fucking break. The film follows a bunch of punks led by Matthew Lillard from Scream and She's All That. Lillard is a rich kid Jewish punk whose dad was a '60s 'rebel' who sold out to become a corporate lawyer. Lillard slums it with his poor, freaky, disenfranchised friends as he labels everyone a poser, beats people up, drinks beer and talks philosophy while taking acid. By the end of the film he drops his punk rock girlfriend for a rich girl who's supposed to be cool because she calls him on dressing weird (she does have a cool mustache though-the best part of the film), but she ends up being as passive as all the girls in

the film. Oh yeah, and he sells out to become a corporate lawyer after his poor white-trash-turned-punk friend OD's on pills by accident. Now, all this could possibly be cool if it was a satire, making fun of the hypocrisy that is rife in the world of punk. But from the beginning of this film you're meant to identify with Lillard. He's the film's guide; the film gives him all this bullshit sympathy.

Example: I saw this film at the San Francisco Film Festival press screening and these two old guys were sitting behind me and my sister as we watched the film. They complained throughout the film about the loud music and drug references. But by the end of the film, as the lights came up, they both said to each other, "Gee, I really liked that film. What a surprise," while my sister and I were just puking. These guys liked the film because in the end they weren't threatened by the film at all. The message is that rebellion is okay while you're young but when it's time to get serious, you step in line just like everyone else. The thing that really bugs me about all this is here you have a film that is released by Sony Pictures Classics, a subsidiary of a big corporate company, that will only release a punk film if it ultimately rejects anything revolutionary in its content. By treating his whole "punk" time as some bored kid phase, the film rejects all the punk content that came before it, it rejects all the music, the inspiration and the intellectual questioning that is such a part of punk, while posing as a punk rock film to get "punks" to come see the film. During the film there was some stuff that

was familiar, it's not like punks on TV who are supposed to be so threatening and they're just a joke. But that's what makes this film so lame—it uses authenticity only to blow it off later.

While films like Hard Core Logo, Delicate Art of the Rifle, Toast of the Gods, Love God and Men Cry Bullets are in the true spirit of punk (only Hard Core Logo is specifically about punk but it was released by Miramax as a pet project of Tarantino's and was very poorly handled), these truly challenging films are ignored by distributors while SLC Punk gets huge support from the Indiewood establishment. Jan de Bont, the guy who directed Speed, was the executive producer. One of the other producers brought us Gen Xploitation like Hackers.

I also hate this film because it sucks quality-wise. The first 20 minutes were exciting. You felt like the film was going to be a great interpretation of '80s punk; I personally was looking forward to seeing how similar the Salt Lake City scene was to the one in Minneapolis that influenced me so much when I was growing up. Soon, though, you realize that this film goes nowhere. It shows off the "different" types of punks like a primer. There's constant droning about who's a poser and who's not (to see this done well check out Sir Drone by Raymond Pettibon). Lillard spends some time putting "cool" girls on a pedestal when all they ultimately do is be girlfriends to the guys in the film-how different. Towards the middle-end, the film gets seriously dragged down by multiple acid-induced dronings that masks as philosophy. By the

time the friend dies and the "hero" sells out, you're mad at yourself for even giving this film a chance to redeem itself, to say something that has any resonance.

There's hardly any mention of how a lot of people get into punk to escape from abuse at home or school—the characters have chosen to be "different" to rid themselves of boredom. And there's no hint that punk can go beyond the "youth stage" and have a real influence on how people live their lives. I look around me and I see tons of people who use a punk model to run their own businesses, to create their own music, art, and films, to document what's around them through zines. There's some lame "I'm working from the inside now" sentiment that's supposed to make you think that the main guy isn't a total asshole, but his dad is so lame and he's following exactly in his father's footstepsyou know he's gonna be a lame richerthan-yuppie who flaunts his rebellious past to prove he's not uncool.

Now I'm not saying that every movie about punk has to be positive, I love Penelope Spheeris' Suburbia, which is a very dark look at the world of punk. But to completely ignore punk's spirit and influence beyond college partying misses the point of what inspired punk—and why people are drawn to it in the first place. Yes, there's tons of people who discarded punk only to become the parents they were trying to escape, but do I have to sit through a film glorifying them?

By the time this column comes out the film will already have been released in and erased from theaters, but if you're tempted to pick it up at the video store, ignore the impulse and reach for some truly cool indie films like Gods and Monsters. It's about the guy who created the Frankenstein movies who, as an old man, can't stop hitting on his gardener, played by Brandon Fraiser. Or Buffalo 66, which, despite Vincent Gallo's massive ego, is still one of the most risk-taking films of last year. Or The Cruise, a docu-

mentary about this speed freak New York City bus tour guide whose philosophy on life and the world is a million times more interesting than the self-pity soaked rants of the "punks" in SLC Punk. Or Slums of Beverly Hills, about a girl coming of age in the '70s who discovers how cute Kevin Corrigan is and the joy of vibrators. Or Run Lola Run, a truly amazing German film about a girl who has to raise \$100,000 in twenty minutes or her boyfriend will be killed. These are all films that are truly indie to me-they take chances and experiment with cinema in a fresh and original way. SLC Punk is like a Bill Gates lecture dressed up in Doc Martiens and chains and a blue mohawk.

Short Takes

On a lighter note, I just got my copy of The Ultimate Film Festival Survival Guide by Chris Gore, editor of Film Threat (nepotism alert-I was interviewed for it). While the magazine is no longerand we should all take off our hats and mourn that-a vital web site and email newsletter still exist (www.filmthreat.com. sign up at FilmThreat@aol.com). And now, luckily for us, there is Chris' festival guide. Usually I glance at a festival guide and then put it down, never really using it again except for the occasional resource. I read The Ultimate Film Festival Survival Guide immediately; I couldn't put it down. It's funny, with advice on everything from how to crash parties (The 10 Lines to Use When Crashing a Party example "I left my cell phone in there!") to making a good film poster to festival applications to personal interviews with people who have been there. Even though I was one of the filmmakers who was interviewed, I didn't expect to read the whole thing in one sitting, which I did.

Chris' advice is right on—he's a shrewd observer of subtle festival politics. The extensive lists with the accompanying advice is invaluable, as well as the resource lists, which me and mom are currently typing

into our database. He also lists the best bars at each festival and covers what you never learn about press and publicity in film school. I'm really glad this book is around because now when people ask my advice on festivals I can tell them just to get this book. It's available from Amazon.com for \$11.98 or ask for it at your local bookstore (Published by Lone Eagle). With Lloyd Kaufman's All I Need to Know About Filmmaking I Learned from the Toxic Avenger and Chris' How To festival book, it's all you need to get your start as an underground filmmaker.

Slumber party alert: If this film is still in theaters by the time this column comes out, then go see it before you all get home and make your crank calls. 10 Things I Hate About You is the perfect teen chick film. I've seen it twice now because it's so much fun. Yes, it's totally rides the teensploitation circuit and it's far from an indie film, but it's also one of the few films that treats its girl characters like real, thinking people. It's a take-off on Taming of the Shrew and it would have been really easy to make the lead, hardcore feminist girl Kat, into the butt of a bunch of sexist jokes. But 10 Things shows us the growth of a very angry teen who learns to let down her defenses while remaining feminist, rebellious and intelligent. Her sister, "the sweet one," surprises by becoming less shallow and she does some kick ass things, but it's Kat who I really relate to. The opening shot of the film is so great, immediately you're like, "Fuck yeah!" My only complaint is all the bands who appear in the film are the ones where the guys play the instruments while the girl lead singers flounce around. But if you have to fill your mall film fix, choose 10 THINGS. @

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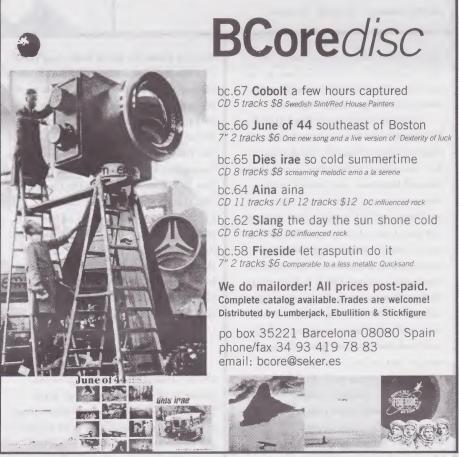
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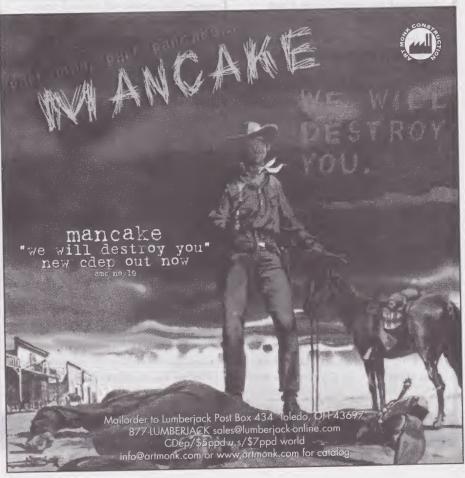
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04/01/1999



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3rteen Version 1.0

This little zine has 13 portraits done without any touch-up or erasing. So, yes there are mistakes and that is what makes this little zine so charming. Printed nice on some thick paper you get portraits of Ian MacKaye, Steve Albini plus more. We need more fun zines like this, the authors little comments of each portrait are worth it. (EA)

\$1.50 807 SE 35th Apt. B Portland, OR 97214

A Diet of Rope and Candlewax #3

This is the "photography" issue, but all it is 12 pages of a color tint test strip reprinted with different titles. Way, way too easy. (DS)

115 McMillen Ave. Columbus OH 43201

Another Name for Nothing #3

Sometimes people do perzines so well, other times you read it and say, "why should I be reading this?" This is one of those times. It's not that the writing is bad, some of it is very, very good but just that the zine doesn't hang together as a whole, which makes each individual part seem fairly irrelevant. (DS)

\$1; 1669 Persinger Rd. SW Roanoke VA 24015

Athena's Scapegoat #3

Typical but above average high school looking girl zine. I know that line doesn't give you necessarily the best picture in your mind. I love these kind of zines, you can read them in an hour or less and the hand painting, coloring, drawing, stickering always makes you remember about the days where one had time to do such things. The innocence and excitement are all there. (EA)

\$1 Athena's Scapegoat 1210 W. 68th Terrace Kansas City, MO 64113

The Ballad of the Two Headed Boy

A comic zine—or is it a zine equivalent of a children's book? Whichever you want I guess, it's a story, told mainly in pictures (nicely done cross-hatched drawings that are marred quite a bit by their reproduction quality—try scanning in line art, not greyscale next time) of a despondent boy with two heads. The two heads don't get along and only after their violent separation does the remaining head realize what he had before. A nice parable for a relationship post-breakup if you ask me. (DS) 4323 Pleasant Ave. 50 Minneapolis MN 55409

Big Big Wuss Theory #1

See the thing is this, writing a line like "Love should come with a warning on it," is just plain cheesy and cheapens any other writing that may surround it because it's terribly cliché—however true it may be—and makes the author either seem (I) unoriginal or (2) naieve. (DS)

¢50; PO Box 23055 Shawnee Mission KS 66203

Breathing Ice tea Mix #5

Breathing Ice Tea Mix is a personal zine that follows the day to day life of the author through jobs, bands, and "crazies." This reads like a diary but luckily avoids most of the sentimentality and deep introspection that plague many personal zines. The entries are funny and quirky and sometimes a little surreal. If you were wondering what I was referring to when I said "crazies", I am referring to a particularly funny section where the author describes all of the crazy people he has met at this job, on the street, etc. Not very PC, but quite humorous. Recommended. (JK)

Sean, 8420 Bridle Rd. Philadelphia, PA 19111

Comphellation #1

This is an easy review, Comphellation is basically a listing by record and by band of all the tracks reissued on the Bloodstains, Killed By Death and similar records released in the last few years. Anyone who collects are needs to collect reissues of the great 78ish-1982ish realm of punk rock will find this a great collection of facts. I myself owning many of these compilations found this labor of love to be of little use besides reminding me what song is on which record. Now, someone who doesn't collect these records will need this to hunt down a track they are looking for. Supposedly there is a similar, but more in depth project coming out soon that will have more than just track listings. Now that would be great to read. Highly suggested to everyone for your mer three bones. (EA)

\$3 lcki PO Box 1223 Bloomington IN 47401

Complete Control #2

A good political I/2 sized zine. While it contains a lot of your standard punk political fare (how to live free of corporations; the evils of money) Complete Control manages to stand apart from the pack by spending a lot of its time focusing on Richmond, VA, the publisher's home. An impeccably well researched article on the author's neighborhood was fascinating! (DS)

PO Box 5021 Richmond VA 23220

Fantasy Illustrated #6

Simply put fantasy writing from the world's greatest writers. And cartoons done so well, that they will give you a boner for sure! It is a shame that all of these comic magazines have to cost so damn much though. (BC)

\$6.00 F.I. P.O. Box 3120 Winter Park, FL. 32790

Fear why the mouse can't breathe #1

A zine that is shorter than this review. A few stories and thoughts (all about a paragraph long). I guess he doesn't have a lot to say just yet. (BC)

A Stamp Al Charity 5258 Five fingers Way, Columbia, MD. 21045

The Flashing Astonisher #12

Columns, interviews, rants & reviews. It's a familiar formula, that's for sure, but TFA's local slant (Syracuse NY) makes this a much more interesting read than so many of the quasi-national wannabe zines out there. Reading TFA you really get a feel for the scene they're coming from and their love for it. This this is huge & packed with stuff including an interview with Fugazi, information on the situation'in Tibet, live show reviews and tons more. (DS)

\$2; PO Box 70 Syracuse NY 13210-0070

Flying Lesson (box) #2

Wow. Normally I really hate zines that reprint personal letters they get from people. It seems really creepy to me, reading someone else's mail like that. But this zine—which is comprised mostly of exactly that—is different because it serves a purpose. The subtitle of this zine is "box" and within is reprinted the contents of a small save box the author kept for three years of her life. It's mostly the aforementioned letters (which have comments by the author now written before, during & after them—the perspective switch is a nice touch), but also includes little line drawings of all the objects within the box as well. It's a great concept for a zine, and being a person that has had save boxes ever since he was a kid, I was enthralled. (DS)

338 S. Madison Bloomington IN 47403

Fortune 2000 #2

Someone want to explain this one to me? No intro, no outtro and as far as I can tell it's a collectively produced zine full of random cartoons, some poetry and other random stuff. Not all of it's bad (although some of it is VERY bad) but without some help in understanding what it's all doing together, I'm lost and frustrated. (DS)

\$2.50; 343 Essex Ave. Gloucester MA 01930

Glass Eye vol. 5 #9

One of those free monthlies that clutter up the entranceway to your favorite cafe. This one is based out of Toledo and this issue features interviews with Meat Beat Manifesto, Vanilla Ice (??) and more. I'm sure if you're in Toledo and bored, this is the shit, but for someone who doesn't and isn't, this doesn't offer a lot to me. (DS)

PO Box 2507 Toledo OH 43606-0507

Here be Dragons #3

A great I/2 sized zine that perfectly merges the personal and the political. This zine is a veritable how-to for good zine writing. Stories about becoming a teacher, Franklin Planners, an interview with the guy behind Chumpire zine, a great interview with a teacher. All sorts of little goodies in this absolute gem of a zine. I'm so happy I got this for review. You'll be happy you bought it. (DS)

\$1; 2036 Wendover St. Apt 4 Pittsburgh PA 15217

The Horrible Truth about Comics #1

Another James Kochalka comic this month! This guy must either do these very fast or just be very busy all the time. This one is an interesting philosophical essay about art, and the meaning of art. The story is told in Kochalka's usual comic style, and is quite well written and charming. One of the more intellectual comics I've read in a while. (JK) Alternative Comics, 611 NW 34th Drive, Gainesville, FL 32607-2429 \$2.95

Inner Swine #4

This is the mega personal zine that Jersey's own Jeff Somers writes. He is witty and makes almost any topic interesting enough to read. There is even a play that he wrote inside. (BC)

\$2.00 Jeff Somers 293 Griffith Street #9, Jersey City, NJ. 07307

The Inner Swine Vol. 5 #1

Great zine and I want you to go to their web site, so instead of giving you any clue on this funny zine just find someone with web access and point your browser to the address below. Then order the Inner Swine. (EA)

http://home.earthlink.net/~linknull

The Inner Swine #1

The Inner Swine is a very well written zine featuring fiction, commentary, interviews and a bunch of hilarious articles. This issue features an article on why technology doesn't improve humanity, a commentary about men's magazines(which is very funny and very accurate), a fiction story called "Freaks of the Industry", as well as IS's 10 signs of the apocalypse(WWJD bracelets, Corey Feldman/Hain movies) and a bunch of other stuff. All the writing on this zine is high quality, but some of it may be a little offensive to some you more PC punks out there. However, if you have a sense of humor, then this comes highly recommended. (JK)

The Inner Swine, 293 Griffith Street #9 Jersey City NJ 07307 \$2.00

Jaded in Chicago #5

While this zine is called "Jaded in Chicago" it doesn't really give off a very local feel, which was disappointing. Instead, it's just another fanzine in the sea without a lot of qualities to set it apart from all the other fish. Interviews with The Queers, Blink 182, Alkaline Trio among others. (DS)
\$2; 4031 Forest Ave. Western Springs IL 60558

Jersey Beat #64

This is like reviewing MRR. Everyone knows the good quality that this zine puts out issue after issue. And if you don't then check one out you knucklehead. This issue features the big Ben Weasel interview along with Electric Frankenstein. (BC) \$3.00 418 Gregory Ave. Weehawken, NJ. 07087

Jinx, issue 4

Jinx is billed as the magazine of danger, adventure and underground style, and it covers all these bases pretty well. Stories in this issue range from Surviving Prison to Graffiti Gangs. One particularly cool article is about surviving the New York subway system as the author attempts to ride the NY subway for 24 hours straight, without getting shot, mugged, raped etc. Other features include a report on NY hardcore and some comics and movie reviews and stuff. Overall, a pretty cool and entertaining read. (JK)

Jinx magazine, Bowling Green Station, PO box 1051, New York, NY 10274-1051

The Lemon Kids #:

Steve Wiesman gives us another collection of twisted little stories with his newest comic, "The Lemon Kids." The Lemon Kids is very similar to Wiesman's last series "Yikes!" Both focus weird little kids who go through strange and quirkily humorous adventures. If you haven't had a chance to see Wiesman's art, than you are missing seeing the work of a one of the more original artists in comics

today. "The Lemon Kids" is a good starting point for anyone who wants to start delving into Wiesman's weird comic world. Recommended. (JK) Alternative Comics, 611 NW 34th Drive, Gainesville, FL 32607-2429 \$2.95

Mad Elephant and Friends

I always think it's cool when someone that's pretty young does a zine, so props to the unnamed author of this short & sweet zine about said author's life. While I've seen zines like this many times before and this certainly doesn't tread any new ground, it's always inspiring to me. Even her dad writes something! (DS)

Free if you send a 100 word letter; 5111 Arbor Pointe Circle Apt 217 Tampa FL 33617

Magic Whistle, issue 3

It's not often that a comic makes me laugh out loud, but this story of a man who mails his butt to an ass doctor but gets the package mixed up with some guys lunch box had me rolling. Most of what makes this comic so funny are Sam Henderson's crude but hilarious drawings, which prove you don't have to be a great artist to make a good comic. However, despite the butt story, the rest of the stories in here are kind of stupid. Buy it for the butt story. (JK)

Alternative Comics, 611 NW 34th Drive, Gainesville, FL 32607-2429 \$2.95

Monica's Story #1

Monica's story is a comic re-telling of the Starr Report as drawn by artist James Kochalka. Although by now I'm sure everyone is more than sick of hearing about Monica Lewinski, this is actually pretty funny. Kochalka draws both Monica and Clinton in his usual cartoony style, and they both come out looking very cute and innocent, even in the steamier parts. This is kind of like the Nickelodeon version of the Lewinisky scandal, exept it's not for kids. I really wouldn't recommend going out of my way to find this, but if you happen to see it in the store, it might be worth checking out. (JK)

Alternative Comics, 611 NW 34th Drive, Gainesville, FL 32607-2429 \$2.95

Otaku Fanzine #4

Wow! What a read, a lot is here to digest and the fifteen stories in Otaku are all worth your time. Canada has the best Zine writers in the world hands down (is it because of the winter months?). I can't say too much besides this except this is a personal zine that everyone should read because I guarantee that you will think about your life and your past life while reading this big thick zine. (EA)

114 Canter Blvd. Nepean ON K2G-2M7 Canada OR Children Zine Distro PO Box 479081 Chicago, IL 60647 USA

Our review policy is very simple: Independently published? We review it. However, that doesn't mean that it gets a good review. If a reviewer likes your zine, you get a good review. If a reviewer doesn't like it, you don't. It's not institutional policy that your zine is good or that it's bad, it's just one reviewer's opinion—so don't freak out. We're sure you put a good deal of work into your project, and that alone is certainly worth some congradulations! But please, if you're pissed at a review, remember: it's not Punk Planet, it's just one reviewer.

ZINES

OX Fanzine #34

A HUGE fanzine from Germany. From what I can tell, these lads have their act together. This one features Nashville Pussy, Sick of it All, Agnostic Front, Dillinger 4 and many more. It also comes with a c.d. (BC)

ox@punkrawk.com

Rats in the Hallway #11

This is a run of the mill punk newsprint zine - like MRR, Jersey Beat, etc. You can smell potential and reaching issue *II we have seen a lot of improvements in writing, printing and layout. I would suggest that if you haven' read RITH, then this is the time to start reading. The columns and interviews are above average, this issue including Sloppy Seconds, 88 Fingers Louie, Floorpunch and more. (EA)

\$2 Rats in the Hallway PO Box 7151 Boulder, CO 80306

The Real Life Diary of a Boy #9

A good mix of personal writing, reflection, and photos. The only thing I could live without is the "arty" layout. If this is a diary, what's with the layered text? (DS)

\$1.50 + 2 stamps 221 Oakcrest Dr. Wilmington NC

Rev. Richard J. Mackin's Book of Letters - #11

This is Consumer Defense Corporate Poetry and the stuff is fucking hilarious. After spending a whole night working at my shitty job and feeling totally numb, this zine put humor back into my life. For those unfamiliar with his work, Rev. Mackin takes the time to write into corporations with his critiques and questions of their products. Sometimes he is prodding; sometimes he is insightful, most of the time he is just being a jackass to them. Some companies even take the time to write back. This issue has a good share of replies and many of them seem clueless. Ever get that letter in the mail, personally addressed just to you, offering you a magazine subscription? Just wait and see how he treats TIME magazine, taking the time to write them back with a counter offer for their subscription rates. Pure Genius. (SY)

\$3 PPD, Rick Mackin, PO BOX 890, Allston, MA 02134

Rude International, Issue 3

Nice Ska/Rudeboy magazine with tons of good articles and reviews and stuff. This issue features a very good interview with Joe Strummer as well as an expose about the Las Vegas skinhead murders, an interview with the US Bombs and a bunch of other stuff. Good stories, good interviews, good magazine. (JK)

Rude:International, PO box 391302 Cambridge, MA 02139 \$3.50

SamZine #3 (Sam's in Jail)

This is a long read, a real long read worth all of your time. This isn't like issue one or two because Sam was in jail for about two weeks and this zine is a reprint of the letters sent from Sam to friends. If you have never been or I suppose have been to jail then this will be an interesting read. To read the desperate writings and often humorous thought of Sam are worth the cheap price of a buck. (EA) Samzine PO Box 954 Bloomington IN 47402

Save us All #3

A nice tiny personal zine from Japan. Ryan chats about religion, punk, and all that good stuff. It's only a buck, so help the kid out. (BC)

Ryan Barker c/o/ center for international edu @ kansai gaidai university 16-1 kitakatahoko-cho, hirakatashi Osaka 573-1001 Japan.

Scenery #9

A great, short I/4 sized since comprised of short writings (personal observations, reprinted letters, longer (relatively) expository pieces) and beautiful sketches of people. A nice, quick read that really teaches you a lot about the author without revealing so much as to seem indulgent—or worse, creepy. Quite beautiful, over all actually. (DS) \$1; PO Box 14223 Gainsville FL 32604

Second Nature Magazine #9 pt. 2

The best emo zine out there, Second Nature does it all correct. Nice printing, great layout and graphics and way above average writing. Interviews with Sharks Keep Moving, No Idea records and so much more. This is part two and without issue number eight it is hard for me to get the full effect, but this is a winner so pick it up if you like anything close to "emo" music, (EA)

Second Nature PO Box 11543 Kansas City, MO 64138

The Short Bus Chronicles #1

A great zine here. Packed with interviews (including the Squirt TV kid), and rants and raves. The authors can write very well, and they keep the topics interesting. The record reviews do have a few major label releases in there, but I'll forgive them for that since all of the other content is right on. (BC) \$1.00? Mr. Short Bus 1918 Whitehall Dr. Winter Park, FL. 32792

Squidmail #11

A very well done zine (kinda like how I prefer my chicken). Everything you find in other zines, but for some reason it all just looks better in this one. Fashion articles, and arguments about being gay. (BC)

\$3.00 Squidmail 2331 22A ST. Calgary, AB. T2M 3K6

This Place is Weird

I love the idea behind this: artist Rich Mackin had an installation in the bathroom of something called "The Revolving Museum" in Boston and this zine is the documentation of that piece, taking it all down from the walls and reproducing it—piece by piece—on each page. As for the work itself, I was most intrigued by the pages that reproduced the section of the piece that consisted of blank paper in a bathroom stall, with an invitation for people to write on it—interactivity is always a nice thing to see in art, and lends itself to so much depth. The other pieces in the zine—mostly Constructivist/Winston Smith type collages aren't as exciting to me, but well produced none the less. (DS)

\$3; PO Box 890 Allston MA 02134

Train Wreck #4

Nice little package going here. Awesome interviews with June of 44, Magic Eye Singles, Ativin and more. The writing is excellent and interviews have the ever important discographies that I think every interview should have (thank you!). This could be a top ten zine if they made it a little bigger, and put it out more often. Pick this one up. (EA)

\$1.50 Train Wreck PO Box 652 Sydney Nova Scotia
B1P 6H7 Canada

The Urban Hermit #2

I/2 sized handwritten zine with stories that would be much more interesting if the handwriting wasn't in ALL CAPS and really thin, making it painful to sit through an extended reading. My eyes feel like they're bleeding after reading this. Personal comfort aside, these are nice personal tales of traveling, schooling, and living. (DS)

\$1; 1122 East Pike St. #910 Seattle WA 98122

Wicked Violet #3

A harrowing perzine documenting abuse, love, eating disorders, family death, family breakup and much more. This one touched me more than most, partially because the writing and pacing was more thought out and less confessional, and partially because I think it may be better than most. (DS)

\$1 + 2 stamps; UNCW Station, PO Box 29096 Wilmington NC 28407

Wicked Violet #4

Another very short personal zine here. A few drunken stories and rants from a gal who lives in the beautiful city of Wilmington, NC. You have to go there and see the battle ship. (BC)

W.V. uncw station, P.O. Box 29096 Wilmington, NC. 28407

The Whizzbanger Guide to Zine Distributors #3

Wow. What a project!! This is an incredibly detailed listing of over 200 zine distributors from around the globe. An absolute MUST HAVE for anyone that publishes a zine and wants to get it to people above and beyond their 10 friends. Accolades go out to publisher Shannon!! (DS)

\$3; PO Box 5591 Portland OR 972

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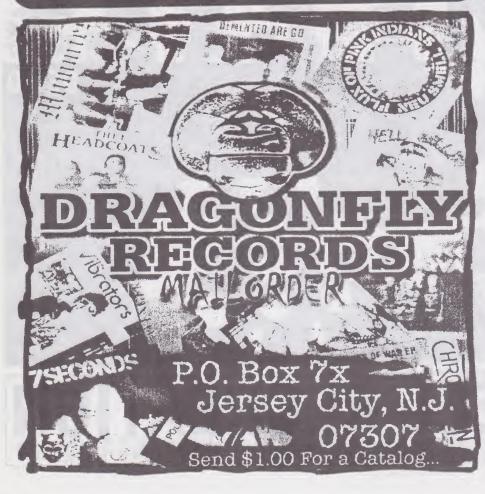
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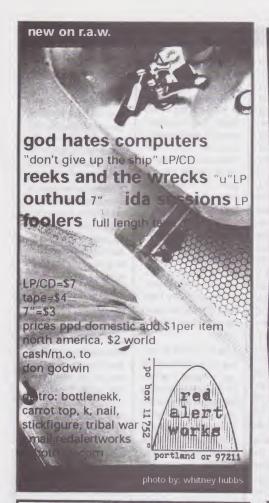
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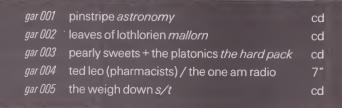
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All issues before PP15 are all black & white. Covers of PP15-21 are 2-3 color. All issues after 21 have full color covers. And finally, all issues before PP29 are printed on newsprint. Confused yet?

PP4 EPITAPH records, ALLIED records and a PUNK LIVING WITH AIDS. Article on ABC NO RIO. 80 pgs.

PP8 RED AUNTS, AUS ROTTEN, FABRIC, and THE SMEARS. Article on PUNK PUBLISHING. 104 pgs.

PP11 TEXAS IS THE REASON, NAKED AGGRESSION, JOHN COUGAR CONCENTRATION CAMP, and CHRISTIE FRONT DRIVE. Article on COMMUNITY BASED MONEY. 104 pgs

PP13 ADRIAN TOMINE, LIFETIME, JON MORITSUGU, and SINKHOLE. Article about VOTING. 112 pgs

PP14 RE/SEARCH'S V. Vale, DELTA 72, PROMISE RING, THE STRIKE, and FACTSHEET 5'S R. Seth Friedman. Article about PUNK & MULTINATIONAL CAPI-TALISM. 120pes

PP15 20 pages of COVERAGE FROM THE 1996 DEMOCRATIC & REPUBLICAN CONVENTIONS. Interviews with Sarah Dyer/ACTION GIRL COMICS, RHYTHM COLLISION, CHAMBERLAIN, and CHEESECAKE 120 pgs

PP16 SARAH JACOBSON, DAMNATION AD, THE DISMEMBERMENT PLAN, CHANGE ZINE. Articles about CULTURE JAMMING, and the 1996-97 NBA SEASON DIY files on ZINE DISTRIBUTION BEST RELEASES OF 1996, 120 pgs

PP17 "ALL PUNK CONS" a critique of modern punk. Interviews with THE DESCENDENTS, DAN O'MAHONEY, SNAPCASE, RYE COALITION, and PAIN. Article on LIVING WITH THE POSSIBILITY OF BREAST CANCER. 136 pgs.

PP22 PUNK PLANET GOES UNDERCOVER WITH THE

CHRISTIAN MEN'S MOVEMENT, THE PROMISE KEEPERS. Interviews with RAY & PORCELL OF SHEITER/YOUTH OF TODAY, EXENE CERVENKA, GERN BLANDSTEN RECORDS, OVARIAN TROLLEY, BURNING AIRLINES, and author STEWART HOME. PANSY DIVISION TOUR DIARY. And PP gets into the ring with INCREDIBLY STRANGE WRESTLING. 168 pgs.

PP23 CHUMBAWAMBA: Has mainstream success blunted their anarchist ideals? Also inside are interviews with GEARHEAD FANZINE, LOVEITT RECORDS, SUBTERRANEAN DISTRIBUTION, THE VAN PELT and THE YOUNG PIONEERS. Articles on the PIRATE RADIO movement, on being an OUTREACH WORKER FOR HOMELESS YOUTH, GURILLA POSTERING and the RECENT CONTROVERSIES SURROUNDINGTHETEAMSTERS. 154 pgs

PP24 THE ART & DESIGN ISSUE. The current state of art and punk. Interviewed in this issue are comic activist SETH TOBOKMAN. designers ART CHANTRY and HOUSE INDUSTRIES, photographers CYNTHIA CONNOLLY, CHRISSIE PIPER and PAUL DRAKE and tattoo artist KIM SAIGH Articles about the poster art of FRANK KOZIK, STATE SUB-SIDIZING OF THE ARTS, the CUR-RENT STATE OF RADICAL ART. and DESIGN IN THE UNDER-GROUND. 164 pgs. multiple covers no longer available

PP25 THE GROWING GIRL SKATE UNDERGROUND in a word: inspiring! Also in this issue are interviews with SPAZZ, DESOTO RECORDS, The WORLD INFERNO FRIENDSHIP SOCIETY and BY THE GRACE OF GOD's Duncan Barlow explains why he's retiring from the hardcore scene. Plus a talk with OUTPUNK'S Matt Wobensmith about why he's

stopping his seminal zine & label.
Articles on SPOKEN WORD & 25
YEARS OF CHOICE. Plus, PP25
looks at the REAL REASONS THE
CLINTON ADMINISTRATION WANTS
TO GO BACK TO IRAQ. 144 pgs

PP26 STEVE ALBINI, talks about everything from working for major labels to playing guitar to the state of punk rock today. Also interviewed in PP26: AVAIL, SMART WENT CRAZY, SERVOTRON, POLYVINYL RECORDS, COMPOUND RED and RED MONKEY. Aricles include a piece about TOUCH & GO RECORDS' RECENT LAW-SUIT WITH THE BUTTHOLE SURFERS, NEEDLE EXCHANGE PROGRAMS, and an expose on the less than progressive politics of healthfood chain WHOLE FOODS. Plus, PP writes the story of THE TRAGIC DEATH OF GRAFFITI ARTIST TIE. Jampacked at 156 pages.

PP27 A rare talk with Bikini Kill's KATHLEEN HANNA. Also interviewed in PP27: DISCOUNT, CHROM-TECH, ASSUCK, the PEECHEES, and PRANK RECORDS' Ken Sanderson. Articles include "Rebels Without a Cause," Punk Planet looks into the GROWING HYSTERIA SURROUNDING TEEN VIOLENCE Ion Strange breaks the law and travels with a group BRINGING HUMANITARIAN AID INTO IRAO Marc Bayard is the first person to teach A COLLEGE COURSE BASED ON PUNK-he writes about his experience in "Punk 101." Finally, TWO ANTI-RACIST SKINHEADS WERE MURDERED IN LAS VEGAS THIS JULY-Punk Planet investigates, 156 pgs

PP28 looks at the GROWING
HEALTHCARE CRISIS IN
AMERICA THROUGH THE EYES
OF A OFTEN-OVERLOOKED
GROUP: MUSICIANS. As author
Alex McCown explains. "a

grand total of zero labels in America today currently provide health care for their artists." Plus, FILMMAKER PENELOPE SPHEERIS talks with Punk Planet film columnist Sarah Jacobson about her new film, DECLINE OF WESTERN CIVILIZATION 3. Other interviews include: JETS TO BRAZIL. THE GET UP KIDS, ATOM AND HIS PACKAGE and RESIN RECORDS. PP28 also delves into the current sampling controversy surrounding NEGATIVLAND. Other articles in PP28 include a look at THE "LEGACY" OF BILL CLINTONfind out 10 realreasons to not like the guy. Plus, the article "It's (not) a White World" investigates RACE IN PUNKit's not a pretty picture. Finally, "Return to the Holy Land" brings us to ISRAEL THROUGH THE EYES OF AN EXPATRIATE. All this plus the regular columns, reviews DIY and much much more. Our last newsprint issue!! 156 pgs

PP29 checks in with SLEATER-KINNEY on the eve of the release of their follow-up to the wildly successful Dig Me Out. Has widespread critical acclaim changed Sleater-Kinney or have they stayed true to their roots and to themselves-PP29 answers the question. In addition to S-K. PP29 features a talks with KID DYNAMITE, The Metroshifter's K. SCOTT RICHTER, JESSICA HOPPER, publisher of HIT IT OR QUIT IT ZINE, RAINER MARIA. Articles? You betcha: Kim Bae brings you aboard as LOS CRUDOS TOURS SOUTH AMERICA. Author Mimi Nguyen (PP28's It's (not) a White World) takes A PER-LOOK AT SONAL

VIETNAM-as a homeland, as a war and as a state of mind. Also featured in PP29 is a look at THE USE OF PEPPER SPRAY BY THE POLICE; this "non-lethal" weapon is more dangerous than you may think. Additionally, PP29 takes a look at a unique bike program in Bloomington, Indiana-FIND OUT HOW SOME USED BIKES AND A LOT OF YELLOW PAINT CAN HELP CREATE REVOLUTION. Finally, PP29 looks at the GROWING LINREST IN THE KOSOVO REPUBLIC. Also, this is our first issue printed on high-quality 100% recycled paper and featuring our complete redesign.

136 pgs.

PP30 THE MURDER OF IRAQ. Punk Planet #30 devotes 18 pages to coverage of the hornble destruction reaped on the Iraqi people by the US and UN's economic sanctions. The centerpiece of this section is an interview with VOICES IN THE WILDERNESS, an organization that breaks the sanctions and brings much-needed medicine and supplies to the people of Iraq-an act that is illegal here and for which Voices is being fined by the state. It's a terrible story, but one you must read. Also in this issue: BRAT-MOBILE, TODAY IS THE DAY, THRILL JOCKEY RECORDS, SEA-WEED, WICKED FARLEYS, VINYL COMMUNICATIONS and BLUETIP Articles on JESSE "THE" BODY" VENTURA'S VICTORY IN MINNESOTA; the MISSION YUPPIE ERADICATION PROJECT, a militant group bent on ending gentrification in San Francisco; THE GREEN PARTY IN ARCATA. CALIFORNIA; and a UNION VICOTORY IN A NICARAGUAN SWEATSHOP. Plus an expanded DIY section, columns, reviews and much much more. 136 pgs:

PP31 features a much-anticinated talk with IAN MACKAYE. While Punk Planet has talked with many notable punks, few have had the impact or the influence of MacKaye. Whether it's leading by example with his label DISCHORD RECORDS or by continually breaking new ground for the last eleven years with his band FUGAZI, MacKaye has never allowed himself to be nigeonholed or to grow irrelevant. While Punk Planet is well known for its interviews, this promises to be one of the best. Also interviewed in this issue is THE AVENGERS' PENELOPE HUSTON. Huston sat down with Punk Planet associate editor Joel Schalit to talk about the history of the Avengers as well as the band's new future. Additionally, there are talks with TED LEO, ICU. LIFTER PULLER, and DÄLEK. Punk Planet #31 also looks at the DEAD KENNEDY'S LAWSUIT-this long-awaited article promises to shed some light on the bizarre situation that has arisen to pit former bandmates in one of punk's most important bands against each other, PP31 also takes a look at THE POSSIBLE CLOSING OF GILMAN STREET MAIL ORDER BRIDES FROM RUSSIA and LIV-ING WITH CHRONIC CYSTITIS. Plus, columns, reviews, DIY and much much more 136 pgs.

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